

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

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**RENOWNED CONDUCTOR SIR JOHN ELIOT GARDINER LEADS THE
ORCHESTRE RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE ET ROMANTIQUE & MONTEVERDI CHOIR**
AT CAL PERFORMANCES, JANUARY 14, 2004 IN ZELLERBACH HALL

BERKELEY, December 3, 2003 – One of the most versatile conductors on the podium today, **Sir John Eliot Gardiner**, leads two of his remarkable ensembles at Cal Performances for one extraordinary evening of masterwork repertoire, **Wednesday, January 14 at 8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall. Founded by Gardiner in 1964, the **Monteverdi Choir** joins his **Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique** (ORR), established in 1990, for a resplendent evening of vocal and instrumental works. “Out came the benefits of period instruments: pungent woodwinds, clarion trumpets, and the ensemble clearly voiced like some brilliantly registered organ,” raved *The Times* (London) of a 2002 collaboration between these two dynamic forces. The Cal Performances program features **George Frederic Handel’s** Coronation Anthem: *Zadok the Priest*; **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s** *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*; and **Franz Joseph Haydn’s** *Heiligmesse - Missa Sancti Bernardi von Offida*.

SIR JOHN ELIOT GARDINER

Sir John Eliot Gardiner, acknowledged as a key figure in the early music world, has consistently gone against prevailing orthodoxy through his particular combination of scholarship and inspired musicianship. He is the founder and artistic director of the Monteverdi Choir, the English Baroque Soloists (EBS) and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique. Alongside activities with his own ensembles, Gardiner appears regularly as guest conductor with the Vienna Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He was principal conductor of the NDR Sinfonieorchester in Hamburg for four years, and from 1982 until 1988 music director of the Opéra de Lyon, whose orchestra he founded.

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The extent of his repertoire is illustrated in more than 250 recordings for major European record companies (principally Deutsche Grammophon and Philips Classics), which have received numerous international awards. Over the years, Gardiner has won more *Gramophone* awards than any other artist, and is matched only once in his achievement of winning three awards in one year. Recordings include Weber's *Oberon*, a recording of music by Elgar with the Vienna Philharmonic, *Alceste* by Gluck, and Haydn's last six masses. The Haydn double-CD set (Heiligmesse and Paukenmesse) and his recording with the ORR and violinist Viktoria Mullova of the Beethoven and Mendelssohn violin concertos, were both released in the spring of 2003.

In 1987 Gardiner received an honorary doctorate from the University of Lyon, and in 1996 he was nominated Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government. In 1992 he became an Honorary Fellow of both King's College, London and the Royal Academy of Music. In 1990 he was made a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire), and was awarded a KBE (Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire) in 1998.

Performance highlights of 2003 have included Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* at Covent Garden, a European tour of Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Monteverdi Choir and the EBS in March and April, and a new production of Berlioz's *The Trojans*, with the ORR, at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris in October. He has just returned from touring two programs of Beethoven and Walton with the London Symphony Orchestra.

MONTEVERDI CHOIR

The **Monteverdi Choir** is one of Britain's most prestigious vocal ensembles. The group was founded at Cambridge in 1964 by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, at that time an undergraduate, with the aim of introducing the colors and passion of Italian music to audiences reared in the English choral tradition. From its Wigmore Hall debut in London in 1966, the Monteverdi Choir grew into a virtuoso ensemble committed to exploring the repertoire fanning out from the Baroque. It soon became famous for its passionate, committed singing, underpinned by a strong rhythmic vitality and the ability to switch composer, language and idiom with stylistic conviction. At the forefront of the early music revival in Europe, the Monteverdi Choir has

brought life and public awareness to a wide range of forgotten music by composers such as Gabrieli, Gesualdo, Campra and Leclair. It has also brought new insights to the performances of masterpieces by Handel, Bach and Mozart and more recently to the work of great 19th-century composers, including Beethoven, Berlioz and Verdi.

The choir served in residence for ten consecutive years at the International Handel Festival in Göttingen, Germany and at the Internationale Bachakademie in Stuttgart, Germany in 1988 and 1991. The Monteverdi Choir celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1989 with a world tour, accompanied by the English Baroque Soloists. The 30th anniversary in 1994 was marked with two concerts at the Guildhall in London. Its greatest touring and musical achievement, however, was 2000's Bach Cantata Pilgrimage. Perhaps the biggest Baroque project ever undertaken, the choir, together with the English Baroque Soloists directed by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, performed all 198 of J.S. Bach's sacred cantatas, in 63 churches throughout Europe, to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the composer's death.

As an opera chorus, the Monteverdi Choir has performed in Milan's La Scala as well as theaters in Zürich, Paris, Lyon and Strasbourg. January 1994 saw the choir's first collaboration with the Vienna Philharmonic for a recording of Lehár's *The Merry Widow*. A European tour of *Die Zauberflöte* in 1995 saw the completion of Sir John Eliot Gardiner's six-year project to perform and record the seven great Mozart operas for which the choir formed the chorus.

In the 1995 Holland Festival the choir gave the world premiere of *Songs of Despair and Sorrow* by György Kurtág at the Concertgebouw. In the summer of 1996 the Monteverdi Choir joined the ORR under Gardiner in performances of Beethoven's *Leonore*, *Missa Solemnis* and Choral Symphony throughout Europe and at the inaugural Lincoln Center Festival in New York. In 1998 the choir, again with the ORR under Gardiner, gave acclaimed performances of Verdi's *Falstaff* at the BBC Proms and Verdi's Requiem at St. Paul's Cathedral as part of the City of London Festival, following a tour of Germany and Italy.

The Monteverdi Choir has more than 100 recordings to its name. These include all the major choral works of Bach, several Handel oratorios and odes—including most recently,

Handel's *Dixit Dominus*—most of Purcell's semi-operas, Mozart's Requiem and C-minor Mass, Haydn's *Die Jahreszeiten*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*.

ORCHESTRE RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE ET ROMANTIQUE

The **Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique** was established in 1990 by Sir John Eliot Gardiner and has since made a major impact on the international music scene. It has attained a world standing with performances at home in London and throughout Europe; in Tokyo and Osaka, where Gardiner conducted the complete Beethoven symphony cycle; and in New York, where the orchestra took part in the inaugural Lincoln Center Festival. This rapid success owes much to its shared heritage with the English Baroque Soloists, formed by Gardiner in 1978. The ORR extends the range of period instrument performance to repertoire of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

One of the orchestra's outstanding successes to date has been the series of performances of music by Berlioz. This series began with the *Symphonie Fantastique* performed and filmed in the former Conservatoire de Musique in Paris, where the very first performance took place in December 1830. In October 1993 the ORR joined the Monteverdi Choir and Gardiner to give the first performances since 1827 of Berlioz's *Messe Solennelle*. After touring the work in Europe, the United Kingdom premiere at Westminster Cathedral was broadcast live on BBC2.

A recording of the complete Beethoven Symphonies by the ORR and Gardiner was named "Record of the Year" by *Classic CD* magazine. Following an acclaimed recording of the complete Schumann symphonies for Deutsche Grammophon, the ORR performed Verdi's *Falstaff* in Italy and Germany during July 1998. They returned to give a semi-staged performance of *Falstaff* with the Monteverdi Choir at a Royal Albert Hall Prom, before recording it for Philips Classics. This production was revived in 2001 for performances in the spring at the Châtelet in Paris.

In 1999 the ORR performed complete cycles of Beethoven Symphonies in Vienna and Los Angeles. Following a Schumann festival in New York, the ORR joined the Monteverdi Choir for performances of the Scenes from Goethe's *Faust* in Lucerne and for a BBC Prom at

the Royal Albert Hall in August. In October the ORR and Monteverdi Choir gave staged performances of Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

In 2002 the orchestra returned to the Châtelet for performances of Weber's *Oberon*, with a concluding performance at the Barbican in London. This was followed by a recording of Beethoven's and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerti. In September of that year the ORR toured Europe with acclaimed performances of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. During 2003, the ORR has appeared at the BBC Proms with the Monteverdi Choir performing Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*, followed in October by six performances of Berlioz's epic opera *The Trojans* at the Théâtre du Châtelet.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique** and the **Monteverdi Choir** led by **Sir John Eliot Gardiner** on **Wednesday, January 14 at 8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$36.00, \$56.00 and \$72.00**. 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; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty, 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 the Cal Performances Ticket Office at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Wednesday, January 14 at 8:00 p.m.

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

Chamber Music and Orchestra

Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique

Monteverdi Choir

Sir John Eliot Gardiner, conductor

Program:

Handel/Coronation Anthem: *Zadok the Priest*, HWV 258

Mozart/Vesperae Solennes de Confessore, K. 339

Haydn/Heiligmesse - Missa Sancti Bernardi von Offida, Hob. XXII: 10

Tickets: \$36.00, \$56.00 and \$72.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.

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