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**THE PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA RETURNS WITH  
HANDEL'S MESSIAH AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**Maestro Masaaki Suzuki guest conducts the orchestra**

**BERKELEY, November 7, 2012**—**Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra**, led by conductor **Masaaki Suzuki**, with “a subtle ear for color, a keen sense of harmonic direction, and an ability to make phrases breathe and rhythms live” (*The New York Times*), returns to Cal Performances with **George Frederic Handel**'s class oratorio *Messiah* on **Saturday, December 8 at 7:00 p.m.** at **First Congregational Church**. This performance will feature the **Philharmonia Chorale**, directed by **Bruce Lamott**, and soloists from Suzuki's ensemble at Yale University's Institute of Sacred Music: **Sherezade Panthaki**, soprano, **Fabiana González**, alto, **Dann Coakwell**, tenor and **Dashon Burton**, bass-baritone. Speaking on a recent Handel performance, *San Francisco Classical Voice* applauded the “irresistible combination of rhythmic verve and sheer delight” of the ensemble.

Handel (1685–1759) completed *Messiah* in 1742. While it was originally intended for performance during Lent and Easter, *Messiah*—subtitled “A Sacred Oratorio”—has in modern times become an Advent and Christmas-season mainstay. The work combines Old and New Testament texts concerning prophecies of a savior, the Messiah.

The **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra** has presented historically informed Baroque, Classical and early-Romantic music on original instruments since its founding in 1981 by **Laurette Goldberg**. **Nicholas McGegan** has been its artistic director since 1985. The group has garnered an impressive reputation including Musical America's Ensemble of the Year in 2004. Based in the Bay Area, the ensemble has toured nationally and internationally performing in prominent locations such as BBC Proms, Tanglewood, Concertgebouw and Disney Hall. The **Philharmonia Chorale** was created in 1995 to provide voices for works that the orchestra performs. This group is composed of 24 singers that have distinguished solo and ensemble

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experience with San Francisco Symphony, American Bach Soloists, Carmel Bach Festival and others. The chorale has been led by Bruce Lamott since 1997.

The Philharmonia Orchestra has collaborated with Cal Performances on a number of occasions. Most recently in the 2011-2012 season the ensemble performed in Mark Morris's *Dido and Aeneas* with Stephanie Blythe singing the role of Dido and with Morris conducting.

**Masaaki Suzuki** is currently the director of Bach Collegium Japan and a visiting professor at Yale's Institute of Sacred Music. A leading voice in early music, Suzuki has conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Melbourne Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and others. He has recently won the German Record Critic's Award in 2010 and a BBC Music Magazine Award with his recording of Bach motets with Bach Collegium Japan. Suzuki last appeared with Bach Collegium Japan at Cal Performances in March 2006.

Soprano **Sherezade Panthaki** is known as a talent in the field of early-music and has worked with many of the world's leading early music interpreters including Nicholas McGegan, Simon Carrington and Willim Christie. She sang Handel's *Messiah* previously with the Nashville Symphony. Born in India, Panthaki recently graduated with an Artist Diploma from Yale School of Music and Yale Institute of Sacred Music where she won multiple awards such as the prestigious Phyllis Curtin Career Entry Prize. Alto **Fabiana González**, a Puerto Rican native, recently completed her Masters in Early Music Performance at Yale School of Music, and has since become a rising star in the United States. In addition to solo performances, she has worked with various national and international festivals including the International Baroque Institute at the Longy School of Music, the Norfolk Festival and the Simon Carrington Chamber Singers. Tenor **Dann Coakwell** is equally well versed in early and lyric opera. He debuted at Carnegie Hall in 2010 as Audrey in Prokofiev's *Dalyekie Morya (Distant Seas)* and has worked with such conductors as Suzuki and Helmuth Rilling. He has appeared as a tenor soloist with the five time Grammy-nominated group Conspirare both in performance and in their 2009 CD, *Conspirare: A Company of Voices*. Coakwell holds his Artist Diploma in Vocal Performance from Yale School of Music and Yale Institute of Sacred Music. Bass-baritone **Dashon Burton** has recently collaborated with Suzuki, Pierre Boulez and Steven Smith. He sung and recorded

with Cantus, an elite nine piece vocal ensemble that travels across the country and collaborates with artists and groups such as the Boston Pops, James Sewell Ballet and Bobby McFerrin. He is a founding member of Roomful of Teeth, a vocal group committed to exploring the full range of possible vocal techniques.

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for the **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra** on **December 8** at **7:00 p.m.** in **First Congregational Church** are priced at \$68.00, and are subject to change. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5.00 discount (Special Events excluded). For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior, and community rush tickets. For more information about discounts, go to <http://calperformances.org/buy/discounts.php> or call (510) 642-9988.

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Cal Performances thanks Wells Fargo and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their major support of the Season.

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### **CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

#### **CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Saturday, December 8, 7:00 p.m.**

First Congregational Church  
2345 Channing Way, Berkeley

*Early Music*

**Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra**

**Philharmonia Chorale**

**Masaaki Suzuki**, conductor

**Sherezade Panthaki**, soprano

**Fabiana González**, mezzo-soprano

**Dann Coakwell**, tenor

**Dashon Burton**, bass-baritone

**Program:**

Handel/*Messiah*

**Tickets:** \$68.00, subject to change and available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at calperformances.org; and at the door.

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