



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Atherton | San Francisco | Berkeley**  
**September 6, 2012**

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**PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA OPENS ITS 32ND SEASON WITH  
THE RARELY HEARD *DIOCLESIAN* BY HENRY PURCELL**

Music Director **Nicholas McGegan** conducts the **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale** to open the 2012-13 season celebrating the music of Henry Purcell, first among the great English composers. Called “one of the finest Baroque conductors of his generation” by *The London Independent*, Nicholas McGegan leads the GRAMMY-nominated Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Chorale and soloists in *Dioclesian* (*The Prophetess: or, The History of Dioclesian*), a “tragicomic semi-opera” (the Baroque equivalent of a musical) based very loosely on the life of the Roman Emperor Diocletian.

Perhaps best known for his opera *Dido and Aeneas*, Henry Purcell (c.1659 – 1695) incorporated stylistic elements from French and Italian to create a uniquely English form of Baroque music. With a flair for the dramatic, he mixed song, dance and theatre to sensational effect and he was the only English composer of his time to attain regard equal to that of his counterparts on the European continent. Full of festive drinking songs and rich choral music, *Dioclesian* premiered in late May 1690 at the Queen’s Theatre in Dorset Garden. Ostensibly a tale of struggle and political power, it is truly a story about the universal conflict between love and duty. With this program, Philharmonia Baroque will have performed all of Purcell’s large-scale choral-orchestral works.

The 2012-13 season opens **Wednesday, October 3, 8:00pm** at The Center for Performing Arts at Menlo-Atherton High School and continues **Friday, October 5, 8:00pm** at Herbst Theatre, downtown San Francisco then moving to First Congregational Church, Berkeley for performances **Saturday, October 6, at 8:00pm** and **Sunday, October 7 at 7:30pm**. Tickets are \$25 to \$90 and are available by calling City Box Office at (415) 392-4400 or visiting [www.philharmonia.org](http://www.philharmonia.org). Note: Some sections are already sold out on subscription. **Philharmonia Baroque—Great Music. Period.**



## CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

### WHO

Nicholas McGegan, *conductor*  
Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra  
Philharmonia Baroque Chorale  
Bruce Lamott, *director*

(soloists may be omitted)

Helene Zindarsian, *soprano*  
Jean-Paul Jones, *countertenor*  
Clifton Massey, *countertenor*  
Brian Thorsett, *tenor*  
Jonathan Smucker, *tenor*  
Jeffrey Fields, *baritone*  
John Bischoff, *bass*

### WHAT

Henry Purcell (c. 1659-1695) *Dioclesian*

### Short Description

Purcell's first major success in the theater, *Dioclesian*, is also a Philharmonia Baroque premiere. This "tragicomic semi-opera," (the seventeenth century equivalent of a musical), dances with romantic odes, rollicking drinking songs and concludes with an elaborate masque.

### WHEN/WHERE

Wednesday, October 3 at 8:00 pm  
Atherton – The Center for Performing Arts (555 Middlefield Road)

Friday, October 5 at 8:00 pm  
San Francisco – Herbst Theatre (401 Van Ness Avenue)

Saturday, October 6 at 8:00 pm  
Berkeley – First Congregational Church (2345 Channing Way)

Sunday, October 6 at 7:30 pm  
Berkeley – First Congregational Church (2345 Channing Way)

### HOW

Tickets are priced at \$25 to \$92 and are available through City Box Office at (415) 392-4400 or online at [www.philharmonia.org](http://www.philharmonia.org).

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## **ABOUT PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA**

San Francisco's **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra** has been dedicated to historically-informed performance of Baroque, Classical and early-Romantic music on original instruments since its inception in 1981. Under **Music Director Nicholas McGegan**, Philharmonia Baroque was named Musical America's 2004 *Ensemble of the Year*, and, according to Los Angeles critic Alan Rich, has become "an ensemble for early music as fine as any in the world today." The Orchestra performs an annual subscription season in the San Francisco Bay Area, and is regularly heard on tour in the United States and internationally. The Orchestra has its own professional chorus, the Philharmonia Chorale, directed by Bruce Lamott, and welcomes such talented guest artists as mezzo-soprano Susan Graham, countertenor David Daniels, conductor Jordi Savall, violinist Monica Huggett, recorder player Marion Verbruggen and soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian. Philharmonia Baroque premiered its first commissioned work, a one-act opera by Jake Heggie entitled *To Hell and Back*, in November 2006. In collaboration with the Mark Morris Dance Group, Philharmonia Baroque gave the U.S. premieres of Morris' highly acclaimed productions of Henry Purcell's *King Arthur* and Jean-Philippe Rameau's ballet-opera *Platée*. Among the most-recorded period-instrument orchestras in the United States or in Europe, Philharmonia has made thirty-two highly praised recordings - including its *Gramophone* Award-winning recording of Handel's *Susanna* - for harmonia mundi, Reference Recordings, and BMG. In 2011, Philharmonia Baroque launched Philharmonia Baroque Productions and has released four recordings - archival performances of Lorraine Hunt Lieberson singing Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'ete* and Handel arias; Haydn: Symphonies No. 104 "London", No. 88, No. 101 "The Clock" (nominated for a GRAMMY® Award for Best Orchestral Performance); Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and other violin concertos, featuring soloist Elizabeth Blumenstock; and Handel's *Atalanta*. A CD featuring McGegan conducting Philharmonia Baroque in Brahms's first and second serenades is forthcoming.

This Fall, the orchestra enters its third broadcast season of unreleased live concert recordings on listener-supported KDFC - 90.3 San Francisco, 89.9 North & East Bay and 104.9 South Bay & Peninsula. [www.kdfc.com](http://www.kdfc.com).

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra was founded by harpsichordist and early music pioneer Laurette Goldberg.

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## **ABOUT NICHOLAS McGEGAN**

Nicholas McGegan is loved by audiences and orchestras for performances that match authority with enthusiasm, scholarship with joy, and curatorial responsibility with evangelical exuberance. The *London Independent* calls him “one of the finest Baroque conductors of his generation” and *The New Yorker* lauds him as “an expert in 18<sup>th</sup> century style.” Through twenty-five years as its music director, McGegan has established the San Francisco-based Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Philharmonia Chorale as the leading period performance ensemble in America - and at the forefront of the “historical” movement worldwide thanks to appearances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Ravinia, Tanglewood, the London Proms and the International Handel Festival, Göttingen where he was artistic director from 1991 to 2011.

He has been a pioneer in the process of exporting historically informed practice beyond the small world of period instruments to the wider one of conventional symphonic forces, guest-conducting orchestras which include the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, Toronto Symphony and Sydney Symphony; the New York, Los Angeles and Hong Kong Philharmonics; the Northern Sinfonia and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, as well as opera companies including Covent Garden, San Francisco, Santa Fe and Washington.

Born in England, Nicholas McGegan was educated at Cambridge and Oxford and taught at the Royal College of Music, London. He was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) “for services to music overseas.” His awards also include the Halle Handel Prize; the Order of Merit of the State of Lower Saxony (Germany); the Medal of Honour of the City of Göttingen and an official Nicholas McGegan Day, declared by the Mayor of San Francisco in recognition of his distinguished work with the Philharmonia Baroque.

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## **ABOUT PHILHARMONIA CHORALE**

Critically acclaimed for its brilliant sound, robust energy, and sensitive delivery of the text, the Philharmonia Chorale was formed in 1995 to provide a vocal complement whose fluency in the stylistic language of the baroque period matched that of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. The 24 members of the Chorale are professional singers with distinguished solo and ensemble experience. Chorale members appear regularly with organizations such as the San Francisco Symphony, Carmel Bach Festival, and American Bach Soloists, are guest soloists with most of the area's symphonic and choral organizations, appear in roles with regional opera companies, and have been members and founders of some of the country's premier vocal ensembles, including Chanticleer, the Dale Warland Singers, and Theatre of Voices.

Founded by John Butt, a baroque keyboardist and one of the world's leading Bach scholars, the Chorale has been led by conductor and musicologist Bruce Lamott since 1997. In its first decade, the Chorale's repertoire included nine Handel oratorios, Bach's St. John Passion and Christmas Oratorio, Mozart's Mass in C minor and – in collaboration with other choral ensembles – Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. The Chorale made its New York debut at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1998, and appeared with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra at the new Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Orange County. The Chorale appears on the Orchestra's recordings of Arne's *Alfred*, Scarlatti's *Cecilian Vespers*, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9.

## **ABOUT BRUCE LAMOTT**

Bruce Lamott has been director of the Philharmonia Chorale for more than a decade. He first performed with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in 1989, as continuo harpsichordist for Handel's *Giustino*.

Lamott was previously the Director of Choruses and Conductor of the Mission Candlelight Concerts at the Carmel Bach Festival, where his 30-year tenure also included performing as a harpsichordist and presenting as a lecturer and education director. In eight seasons as Choral Director and Assistant Conductor of the Sacramento Symphony, he conducted annual choral concerts of major works, including both Bach *Passion* settings and Haydn's *The Seasons*, as well as prepared the chorus for most of the standard symphonic choral repertoire.

Lamott received a bachelor's degree from Lewis and Clark College, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Musicology from Stanford University, where he researched the keyboard improvisation practices of the baroque period. LaMott joined the Musicology faculty at U.C. Davis, where he directed the Early Music Ensemble. He currently resides in San Francisco, where he teaches Choral Music and Music History at San Francisco University High School, and is part-time professor of Music History at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Among his other music-related activities, Lamott also teaches continuo realization in the Merola Program of the San Francisco Opera and lectures for the San Francisco Opera Guild.

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## ABOUT THE SOLOISTS

**Helene Zindarsian** (soprano) A frequent soloist with Philharmonia Baroque, Helene has been featured in Campra's Requiem, Purcell's *Birthday Ode to Queen Mary*, Rameau's *Grand Motet*, Handel's *Samson*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Rosenmüller's Magnificat and Vivaldi's Gloria. Other recent highlights include the Marin Symphony where she appeared in Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem*, Mozart's Requiem, and is a much loved regular in the popular annual Candlelight Christmas concert series.

**Jean-Paul Jones** (countertenor) Since moving to the Bay Area in 2009 he has performed as a soloist with groups such as Grace Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys and Pacific Collegium. He also is currently a member of the Bay Area Rainbow Symphony where he plays viola. When he is not performing, he is teaching K-5 music at Buena Vista Elementary School in Walnut Creek.

**Clifton Massey** (countertenor) is often sought for oratorio and ensemble work throughout the Bay Area and beyond. At home on the concert and opera stage, he has appeared as Apollo in Albinoni's *Il Nascimento dell'Aurora* with City Concert Opera, the sorceress in Purcell's *King Arthur* at the Bloomington Early Music Festival, and as soloist with notable period-instrument groups including American Bach Soloists, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Concert Royal NYC and the Dallas Bach Society. He has collaborated with such renowned conductors as Jeffrey Thomas, Nicholas McGegan, Skitch Henderson, John Holloway and Paul Hillier.

**Brian Thorsett** (tenor) fosters a stylistically diversified repertoire of over 200 concert works, which has taken him to performance halls across the US and Europe. Upcoming highlights include perennial favorites such as *Carmina Burana*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Bach's Magnificat and Mass in B minor; Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*; other works include Bruckner's Mass in F minor, Haydn's *Creation*, Britten's *Serenade*, Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, several Chandos Anthems of Handel, and the Requiems of Schutz, Verdi, Mozart and Bob Chilcott.

**Jonathan Smucker** (tenor) has been praised for performances described as "splendid" by *San Francisco Chronicle*, "secure and expressive", and "delivered with firm, elegant line" by *San Francisco Classical Voice*). His repertoire spans more than thirty-five roles, ranging from baroque to contemporary and encompassing opera, oratorio, operetta and musical theater.

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**ABOUT THE SOLOISTS (continued)**

**Jeffrey Fields** (baritone) has performed regularly throughout California in concert, oratorio and opera since moving to the Bay Area in 1999. In 1998, he was selected as an Adams Fellow at the Carmel Bach Festival and has had numerous solo appearances there since; he will sing the Monteverdi *Vespers 1610* there this season. He also sings regularly with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and American Bach Soloists.

**John Bischoff** (bass) is a versatile performer frequently featured in opera, orchestral and choral performances throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. This year, John has appeared as the Sacristan in *Tosca* with Livermore Valley Opera and as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* with West Bay Opera. Upcoming solo engagements include Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with Soli Deo Gloria and Handel's *Samson* with the San Francisco City Chorus. PRESS AND MEDIA RELATIONS CONTACT

For a complete biography, visit [www.philharmonia.org/about/history/](http://www.philharmonia.org/about/history/).  
Press photos are available at [www.philharmonia.org/press-room/resources](http://www.philharmonia.org/press-room/resources).

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