

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cantata Singers celebrates the holiday season with “A Cantata Singers Christmas”

Featuring Baroque and Renaissance music for chamber chorus and orchestra

Date and Time: Friday, December 7, 2018 at 8pm

Date and Time: Sunday, December 9, 2018 at 3pm

Location: First Lutheran Church, Boston, 299 Berkeley Street, Boston

Tickets: \$25-\$75 can be purchased by calling 617-868-5885 or visiting www.cantatasingers.org

Boston, MA—Cantata Singers celebrates the holiday season with two opportunities to hear “A Cantata Singers Christmas”— on Friday, December 7th at 8pm, and on Sunday, December 9th at 3pm, both at First Lutheran Church in the heart of Boston’s Back Bay.

Cantata Singers’ Music Director David Hoose leads a program of radiant Baroque and Renaissance seasonal music for chamber chorus and ensemble. The program begins with Slovene composer Jacobus Gallus Handl’s (1550-1591) “Mirabile mysterium,” which features a style popular in Renaissance Venice of spatially separate choirs singing in alternation. Following is German composer Heinrich Schütz’s (1585-1672) exquisite “Dulcissime et benignissime Christe,” representing some of the best counterpoint written in the seventeenth century. Giovanni Gabrieli’s (1554-1612) “O magnum mysterium” also exhibits the Venetian polychoral style of two alternating and distinct choirs made up of four voices each.

Concluding the first half of the concert are two pieces by Danish-German composer Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707). The first, “In dulci jubilo,” is a traditional Christmas carol written for soprano, alto, bass, two violins, and continuo, featuring soprano Felicity Salmon, alto Amy Lieberman, and bass Brian Church. The text, written by German mystic and monk Henrich Suso, is one of the oldest and most famous examples of a “macaronic” song, or a text that combines both Latin and a vernacular language—in this case, German. The second work, “Das neugeborne Kindelein,” was composed to

celebrate the coming of the new year—also the sixth day of Christmas. The text sets four verses of a popular Christmas hymn, first published in 1588, that celebrates the birth of Jesus and the jubilation of the season.

The second half of the program begins with four works by English Renaissance composer William Byrd (1538-1623). A student of Thomas Tallis, William Byrd is considered one of the greatest English composers of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. His charming communion motet, “Vidimus stellam,” was written for the celebration of Epiphany—the twelfth day of Christmas that recognizes the arrival of the three magi in Bethlehem to the baby Jesus. The delightful “Out of the Orient Crystal Skies,” one of Byrd’s *Consort Songs*, also celebrates Epiphany with resplendence, sung by mezzo-soprano Jennifer Webb. “Hodie beata Virgo,” a motet for four voices rearranged for strings for this performance, and “Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem,” a celebratory motet about Jerusalem, conclude the quartet of musical works by Byrd.

The program concludes with music by English composers Henry Purcell (1659-1695) and Robert Parsons (1535-1572). Purcell’s “O Sing Unto the Lord” is a triumphant anthem based on Psalm 96, which is often read during Christmas Eve mass. The work was written specifically for John Gosling, an outstanding baritone active in the Chapel Royal in the 1680s. Soloists include bass Mark Andrew Cleveland, soprano Janet Ross, alto Jennifer Webb, and tenor Jeffrey Wang. Parsons’ beautiful five-part motet, “Ave Maria,” the most famous composition from his short life, will bring the concert to a sparkling close.

About Cantata Singers

A singular desire to bring to Boston's listeners music that isn't being heard anywhere else has inspired Cantata Singers' programming for 55 years.

In 1964, that music included the cantatas of J.S. Bach. Today, it may be hard for us to believe, but when Cantata Singers was founded in 1964, live performances of Bach cantatas were quite a rarity. In fact, Cantata Singers' early concerts featured the first Boston performances of many of the cantatas.

Bach's music, from the cantatas to the B-minor Mass to the Passions, remains an essential part of Cantata Singers' repertoire. However, the ensemble's repertoire has expanded to include music from the 17th century to today. Cantata Singers has commissioned 15 works for choir and orchestra—including one that was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music—and has presented more than fifty Boston premieres of music both old and new.

Many of Boston's most talented musicians perform regularly with Cantata Singers. The chorus is made up of singers who have careers as musicians, educators, doctors, and architects. Many of these members appear as soloists with Cantata Singers, as well as with other highly respected organizations; some conduct other choruses and orchestras in the area. Although many of our musicians perform actively as solo singers, they choose to sing with Cantata Singers because of the reward they find in performing music of the choral canon at the highest possible level.

Cantata Singers has always focused on the music—be it by Bach, Verdi, Harbison, or Pärt—and its audiences do, too. Our audiences return year after year to hear fresh visions of iconic music, or an intriguing unfamiliar work that is—in fact—quite approachable. Each Cantata Singers concert is often surprising, sometimes challenging, always beautiful, and ultimately inspiring.

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CANTATA SINGERS 2018-2019 SEASON

CONCERT SERIES

Saturday, November 3, 2018

8 p.m. at NEC's Jordan Hall

Pre-concert talk at 7pm

David Hoose, *Music Director*

J.S. Bach: "Wachet auf," BWV 140

John Harbison: *Sacred Trilogy*

The Flight Into Egypt

But Mary Stood

The Supper at Emmaus

First Complete Performance

Friday, December 7, 2018

8 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, Boston

Sunday, December 9, 2018

3 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, Boston

David Hoose, *Music Director*

Jacobus Gallus Handl: Mirabile mysterium

Heinrich Schütz: Dulcissime et benignissime Christe

Giovanni Gabrieli: O magnum mysterium

Dieterich Buxtehude: In dulci jubilo

Dieterich Buxtehude: Das neugeborne Kindelein

William Byrd: Vidimus stellam

William Byrd: Out of the Orient Crystal Skies

William Byrd: Hodie beata Virgo

William Byrd: Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem

Henry Purcell: O Sing Unto the Lord

Robert Parsons: Ave Maria

Friday, January 25, 2019

8 p.m. at NEC's Jordan Hall

Pre-concert talk at 7pm

David Hoose, *Music Director*

James Primosch: Matins

Peggy Pearson, oboe

Béla Bartók: Divertimento for Strings

Arvo Pärt: Te Deum

Friday, March 22, 2019

8 p.m. at NEC's Jordan Hall

Pre-concert talk at 7pm

David Hoose, *Music Director*

Franz Joseph Haydn: The Creation

Friday, May 17, 2019

8 p.m. at St. Paul Church, Cambridge

Pre-concert talk at 7pm

David Hoose, *Music Director*

Anton Bruckner: Mass No. 2 in E minor

Igor Stravinsky: Mass

Giovanni Gabrieli: Jubilate Deo

CHAMBER SERIES

Friday, February 8, 2019

7:30pm at American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge

Pre-concert talk at 6:30pm

Allison Voth, *Chamber Series Director*

Clara Schumann: Liebst du um Schönheit

Clara Schumann: Liebeszauber

Alma Mahler: Waldseligkeit

Fanny Mendelssohn: Ferne

Fanny Mendelssohn: Bergeslust

Pauline Viardot: Madrid

Lili Boulanger: Parfois, je suis triste

Lili Boulanger: Un poète disait

Nadia Boulanger: J'ai frappé

Nadia Boulanger: Le couteau

Cécile Chaminade: J'avais douté de votre amour

Cécile Chaminade: Villanelle

Germaine Tailleferre: Vrai dieu, qui m'y confortera

Germaine Tailleferre: Mon mari m'a diffamée

Pauline Viardot: Les Bohémiennes

Elizabeth Maconchy: On Stepheners Day

Rebecca Clarke: Shy One

Judith Weir: The Romance of Count Arnaldos

Jenni Pinnock: Bells in the Rain

Régine Wieniawski (Poldowski): Colombine

Rhian Samuel: In Memoriam

Florence Aylward: The Window

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Emily Hall: Stillborn
Charlotte Bray: While the Bell Tolls
Thea Musgrave: Daffodils
Thea Musgrave: Willie Webster
Thea Musgrave: Hate whom ye list

Friday, April 26, 2018

7:30pm at American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge

Pre-concert talk at 6:30pm

Allison Voth, *Chamber Series Director*

Amy Beach: "The Year's at the Spring," Op. 44, No. 1

Amy Beach: "Forgotten," Op. 41, No. 3

Amy Beach: "In the Twilight," Op. 85

Margaret Bonds: "Poème d'Automne"

Margaret Bonds: "Summer Storm"

Libby Larsen: *My Antonia*

Marjorie Merryman: *Allison Joseph Songs*

Lori Laitman: *And Music Shall Not End*

Ruth Crawford Seeger: "Chinaman! Laundryman!"

Tania León: "Mi Amor Es"

Susan Botti: "Listen, it's Snowing"

Kamala Sankaram: "The Last Blast of Anthony the Trumpeter"

Sheila Silver: "A Visit to the Asylum"

Sheila Silver: "Recuerdo"

Sheila Silver: "I, being born a woman"

Sheila Silver: "First Fig (Round II)"

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High resolution photos available on our website at:

<http://www.cantatasingers.org/press-kit>

Please contact eweddle@cantatasingers.org for information and questions.



Cantata Singers
Photo Credit: James Luo



Music Director David Hoose
Photo Credit: Michael McVey

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