Baroque Music Festival
Corona del Mar

31st Annual Season
Gala Concert • June 26, 2011
2011-12 concert season

ORCHESTRAS

Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra with Valery Gergiev, conductor
  Thursday, October 13, 2011, and Monday, October 17, 2011 (RHS)
  Elizabeth & Henry Segerstrom Select Series

Chicago Symphony Orchestra with Riccardo Muti, conductor
  Friday, February 17, 2012 (RHS)
  Donna L. Kendall Classical Series

St. Petersburg State Symphony with Roman Leontiev, conductor
  Mikhail Krutik, violin
  Tuesday, March 13, 2012 (RHS)
  Donna L. Kendall Classical Series

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra with Marin Alsop, conductor
  Colin Currie, percussion
  Wednesday, March 28, 2012 (RHS)
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Cleveland Orchestra with Franz Welser-Möst, conductor
  Tuesday, April 17, 2012 (RHS)
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Academy of St. Martin in the Fields with Joshua Bell, leader and violin soloist
  Thursday, April 26, 2012 (RHS)
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Los Angeles Philharmonic with Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, conductor
  Pepe Romero, guitar
  Saturday, April 28, 2012 (RHS)
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  Saturday, February 11, 2012 (IBT)

Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio and Friends
  Thursday, February 23, 2012 (IBT)

Takács Quartet with Garrick Ohlsson, piano
  Tuesday, March 20, 2012 (IBT)

“Night in Napoli” featuring Charles Castronovo, tenor
  Sunday, April 1, 2012 (IBT)

LECTURES

“Drop Dead Gorgeous”
  Monday, October 24, 2011 (IBT)

“Beethoven: Son of Elysium, part I”
  Tuesday, February 21, 2012 (IBT)

“Beethoven: Son of Elysium, part II”
  Monday, April 23, 2012 (IBT)

SPECIAL EVENTS

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Welcome to the 31st annual Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar!

The Baroque Music Festival marks its 31st annual season with this year’s gala concert of choral and instrumental music on the theme of “Handel in Italy.” Elizabeth Blumenstock, a Festival favorite, returns as concertmistress, and John Alexander conducts the Pacific Chorale’s John Alexander Singers in this special program of works by Handel and composers who influenced him during his Italian sojourn between 1706 and 1710. As always, we seek to recreate the Baroque style and sound through the use of period instruments and intimate venues.

Earlier this year, our esteemed founding artistic director and conductor, Burton Karson, retired after 30 remarkable seasons. We are currently in the process of developing new leadership to continue this successful tradition, building upon the strong foundation laid by Dr. Karson. During this period of transition, we have established a welcome partnership with both the Pacific Chorale and the Philharmonic Society of Orange County. Together with these fine organizations, we will be returning once again in 2012 to present our traditional Festival series of five concerts.

The Festival prides itself on its unique role in the artistic life of the community. We remain grateful to our individual contributors, to advertisers in this program booklet, and to the Arts Commission of the City of Newport Beach for their ongoing and generous support.

Let us once again enjoy great music together!

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Martin Haselböck, Music Director

2011/2012 Season

September 24 & 25 - Concertmaster Ilia Korol is joined by Natalia Grigorieva on forte piano for Schubert & Beethoven sonatas

November 12 & 13 - Lutenist John Schneidermann, tenor Daniel Plaster and members of Musica Angelica pay tribute to the ensembles’ founders, lutenist Michael Eagan and gambist Mark Chatfield

January 28 & 29 - Countertenor Daniel Taylor returns with one of the world’s most celebrated early music specialists, soprano Dame Emma Kirkby, in a program that includes Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater

February 18 & 19 - Music Director Martin Haselböck leads a program of Bach Cantatas featuring soprano Mary Wilson

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32nd Annual Season
17-24 June 2012

Dates subject to change

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Festival Program

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Gratefully Acknowledge

✧ Newport Harbor Lutheran Church (The Rev. Bradley Stienstra, Pastor; The Rev’d William Wells, Minister of Music & Organist) for the beautiful setting of our Gala Concert.

✧ Paul & Carol Levin, Manhattan Beach, for the use of their splendid Dowd harpsichord, and for recording our events for our private library.

✧ The Arts Commission of the City of Newport Beach for a financial grant in support of our 31st season.

✧ Community Church Congregational, Corona del Mar (Rev. Chip Fisher, Senior Pastor; Rodger Whitten, Minister of Music) for hosting our February Winter Musicale.

✧ Kelly Ruggirello, CEO of the Pacific Chorale, and Dean Corey, President and Artistic Director of the Philharmonic Society of Orange County, for their guidance during this transitional season and their organizational support of our mission and our future.

✧ Trader Joe’s, Crystal Cove, for providing beverages for post-concert receptions and our Patrons Supper.

✧ Graydon Beeks, Professor of Music at Pomona College and President of the American Handel Society, for writing the concert program notes.

✧ Advertisers in this Festival Program (see page 34) and our many generous individual Supporters (see page 32) for providing the essential financial assistance that makes this Festival possible.

Thanks Burton Karson for his exceptional leadership in the musical community of Orange County for these past decades. Congratulations to Maestro Karson and the Festival!
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It still seems hard to believe that this year’s Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar, isn’t being overseen by Barton Karson.

It’s also hard to believe that it has now been a full 30 years since he cofounded the Festival, together with art historian Irmeli Desenberg and her husband Bud. And it’s just as astounding to realize that, for every one of those 30 years, he served as its artistic director, conductor, organizer, champion, muse and creative force.

Yet, after guiding the Festival from strength to strength through three decades of steady growth, Karson announced this past winter that he felt the time had come to retire. And so the first chapter of the Festival’s remarkable history ends, even as a new one is beginning.

The original concept of the Festival evolved from a dinner conversation one evening in 1980 at the Desenberg’s home. Karson and the other classical music–lovers present were lamenting the dearth of local concerts, especially during the summer. As they talked, they began to brainstorm the idea of organizing a small series of musical events the following June (“when,” as Karson later quipped, “our academic and social calendars would be empty”). The concept grew; planning committees were formed; venues were found; and the Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar, was inaugurated in June 1981 under Karson’s able artistic directorship.

That first Festival, consisting of three concerts and a lecture, was a hit. As critic Daniel Cariaga wrote afterward in the Los Angeles Times, “The no-man’s land between the winter and summer seasons raises some strange one-time-only blooms, but the little Baroque Festival that emerged in Corona del Mar last week deserves to blossom annually.” From that point on, there was no doubt that the Festival would become a yearly event.

Nor was there any doubt that Karson had the enthusiasm and experience to make it happen. As a Professor of Music at California State University, Fullerton, he was well known and respected in the local music community, writing regularly in a variety of publications. And in the years to come he would become even more beloved for his engaging lectures for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the Carmel Bach Festival, the San Diego Opera.
and Symphony Orchestra, the Long Beach Symphony and other groups. (He continues today as a regular pre-concert speaker for the Philharmonic Society of Orange County.)

Throughout each of the following 29 summers, Karson consistently produced a crowd-pleasing and critically acclaimed series of concerts. His Festivals brought together distinguished Baroque musicians, from both the local region and the broader national scene, for a week in June to perform in a series of concerts and recitals. Karson conducted the choral and orchestral ensembles himself, and in many instances also accompanied the performers on piano, organ, or harpsichord.

Each season, he worked tirelessly to select musical works from both well-known and less familiar Baroque composers. Thanks to his meticulous research and study of unpublished manuscripts in European musical archives, Corona del Mar had the distinction of hosting the first modern performances of long-forgotten pieces of historical importance. He also broadened our focus to include neo-Baroque pieces by Romantic and contemporary composers, and commissioned several works especially for the Festival.

Karson often developed concerts or entire Festivals around significant musical themes or events. He frequently transcribed and arranged music to suit particular instruments or vocalists. He insisted that period instruments be utilized in performances whenever possible, to achieve an authentically Baroque style and sound. In addition, he sought to explain the musical selections through insightful program notes and concert commentary, so that audiences could gain a fuller appreciation of the works themselves and the cultural context in which they were created. From the beginning, he undertook to link the music with literature, history and visual arts from the period.

One of the primary objectives that Karson established for the Festival early on was to recapture the feel of musical experiences from the Baroque era by holding events in small churches, gardens, even private homes. It was largely through his personal associations that the initial venues for the Baroque Music Festival emerged — the Sherman Library and Gardens and Saint Michael & All Angel’s Church. The fine reputation of the Festival made it welcome in a number of other settings as well: hence, in 2009 and 2010, the Festival Finale was performed in St. Mark Presbyterian Church and Newport Harbor Lutheran Church, respectively. Other features of the Festival were designed to evoke the intimacy of Baroque-era performance: intermission and post-concert refreshments were provided, and audience members were encouraged to mingle with the performing artists.

Beyond his artistic direction, Karson handled much of the administrative responsibilities of the Festival since its inception, ranging from planning events and raising funds to drafting press releases and locating accommodations for out-of-area musicians. He worked collaboratively with the volunteer Board of Directors and many others who helped make the Festival a reality each year. And it was all a labor of love for him:
he never received any payment for his work as artistic director, administrator, conductor or performer.

One annual fundraising event he introduced was a Winter Musica-cale, which provided an occasion to reach beyond the Baroque epoch and showcase talented soloists in a lively program. The Musicale this past February also served as an opportunity for the Board of Directors and others to celebrate his long-standing contribution to the Festival, as it coincided with his well-deserved “retirement.” The Board is commissioning a piece of neo-Baroque music in his honor, which will be performed at a future Festival concert.

To all who appreciate the extraordinary dedication Dr. Karson has shown in his stewardship of this organization, he is and always will be the esteemed “Maestro.” His long-standing contributions to the musical culture of our community are truly exceptional, and they have allowed the Baroque Music Festival to achieve its distinction as the oldest continuing performing arts organization in Newport Beach. The outstanding success of the thirtieth Festival season last year, as evidenced by sold-out performances, represented a fitting capstone to his illustrious career.

All of us on the Board of Directors of the Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar, owe Burton Karson our warmest thanks. And even as we still find it hard to believe that he has retired, we wish him all the best in his future endeavors!

Board of Directors
Baroque Music Festival
Corona del Mar
WHEREAS Burton Karson, PhD.,
did envision a community musicale; and

WHEREAS Dr. Karson did name it the
Corona del Mar Baroque Music Festival; and

WHEREAS Dr. Karson did organize community
leaders to support it; and

WHEREAS Dr. Karson did recruit the best Baroque musical
artists in the United States to perform in the orchestra; and

WHEREAS Dr. Karson did select and arrange in all its
complexity the music to be performed, and did conduct the
orchestra and soloists for 30 years of increasingly
well-attended and highly regarded performances; and

WHEREAS Dr. Karson’s Performers, Musicians, Members of
the Board of Directors, and two generations of audiences did
and do love, esteem, regard and extol him;

NOW, THEREFORE, by the unanimous agreement of the
members of the Board of Directors of the Corona del Mar
Baroque Music Festival does the said Board solemnly and
gratefully acknowledge his selfless commitment to thirty
years of outstanding professional and personal leadership.
Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar  
2011 Gala Concert  
Sunday, June 26, 4:00 p.m.  
Newport Harbor Lutheran Church

Handel in Italy

Pacific Chorale’s John Alexander Singers  
Festival Orchestra  
Elizabeth Blumenstock, Concertmistress  
John Alexander, Conductor

Gloria from Messa di Santa Cecilia  
Alessandro Scarlatti  
(1660–1725)

I. Gloria in excelsis  
Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to all those of good will.

Katharin Rundus, Soprano · Lorraine Joy Welling, Soprano  
Jason Francisco, Countertenor · Nicholas Preston, Tenor  
Aram Barsamian, Bass

II. Laudamus te  
We praise thee. We bless thee. We worship thee. We glorify thee.

Sarah Thompson, Soprano · Zanaida Robles, Soprano  
Laura Harrison, Alto · Brandon Brack, Tenor  
Thomas Ringland, Bass

III. Gratias agimus  
We give thanks to thee according to thy great glory.

Jason Francisco, Countertenor

IV. Dominus Deus  
Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father almighty. Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only begotten Son. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

Katharin Rundus, Soprano · Lorraine Joy Welling, Soprano  
Daniel Babcock, Tenor

V. Qui tollis  
Thou who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.  
Thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.  
Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.

Maria Cristina Navarro, Soprano · Zanaida Robles, Soprano  
Emmanuel Miranda, Bass
VI. Quoniam
For Thou alone art holy. Thou alone art the Lord. Thou alone art the most high, Jesus Christ.

VII. Cum Sancto Spiritu
With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Miserere in E minor  
Psalm 50 (51)  
Domenico Scarlatti  
(1685–1757)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness;  
according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!  
For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and have done that which is evil  
in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in  
thy judgment.

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Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, thou desir'est truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
   Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones thou hast broken rejoice.
   Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.
   Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.
   Then I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners will return to thee.

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of thy deliverance.
   O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

For thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased.
   The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Do good to Zion in thy good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
   Then wilt thou delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on thy altar.

---

_Sdegno la fiamma estinse_  
A. Scarlatti

Madrigal for five voices

Disdain extinguished the flame that scorched me, blunted the arrow that struck me, and untied the bonds that fettered me. The heart fears neither bonds nor wounds nor flames and pays no heed to lightning.

Thou faithless one! When thine eyes are so serene, happy and free from love’s torments, thou canst be disdainful of the fire, the arrow and the bonds.

Katharin Rundus, Soprano · Lorraine Joy Welling, Soprano  
Jason Francisco, Countertenor · Daniel Babcock, Tenor  
Thomas Ringland, Bass
On the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of September 11, 2001

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Concerto Grosso in D, Op. 6, No. 7
Arcangelo Corelli
(1653–1713)

Vivace · Allegro · Adagio
Allegro
Andante largo
Allegro · Adagio
Vivace

No, di voi non vo’ fidarmi, HWV 189
George Frideric Handel
(1685–1759)

Duetto da camera for two sopranos and continuo

No, I do not want to trust you, blind Love, cruel Beauty.
You lie too much, like blandishing gods.
Once before you managed to trap my trusting heart.
I know from experience your lies; you will always be two tyrants.

Maria Cristina Navarro, Soprano · Zanaida Robles, Soprano

Dixit Dominus, HWV 232
Handel
Psalm 109 (110)

I. Dixit Dominus
The Lord says to my lord: “Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.”

Sarah Thompson, Soprano · I-Chin Feinblatt, Alto
Nicholas Preston, Tenor

II. Virgam virtutis tuae
The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes!

I-Chin Feinblatt, Alto
III. Tecum principium in die virtutis
Your people will offer themselves freely on the day you lead your host upon the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning like dew your youth will come to you.

Maria Cristina Navarro, Soprano

IV. Juravit Dominus
The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind,

V. Tu es sacerdos in aeternum
“You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

VI. Dominus a dextris tuis
The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.

Sarah Thompson, Soprano · Lorraine Joy Welling, Soprano
Laura Harrison, Alto · Brandon Brack, Tenor
Aram Barsamian, Bass

VII. De torrente in via bibet
He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

Maria Cristina Navarro, Soprano · Zanaida Robles, Soprano

VIII. Gloria Patri
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.
In late 1706, an eager young musician named George Frideric Handel set out from Hamburg, Germany, on a pilgrimage to the great musical centers of Italy: Florence, Venice and Rome. During his three-year visit, he made the acquaintance of some of the leading composers of his day, including Arcangelo Corelli and the father/son team of Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti. In this afternoon’s program, we explore some of the music that inspired Handel’s budding genius — and some of the music that Handel wrote during his Italian sojourn.

**Program Notes**

Alessandro Scarlatti: *Gloria* from the St. Cecilia Mass

When, sometime in late 1706, the 21-year-old Handel arrived in Italy, he hoped to profit from personal acquaintance with the most famous Italian musicians of his time. One of these was Alessandro Scarlatti, who, although born in Palermo, had spent his formative years in Rome under the protection of the exiled Queen Christina of Sweden.

From 1684 to 1702, Scarlatti was in Naples as the *maestro di cap\-\pella* of the Spanish viceroy. When he returned to Rome, he took on the position of music director at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore and entered the service of Cardinal Ottoboni. His Passion Oratorio, set to a text by Ottoboni, was performed on the Wednesday of Holy Week in 1708 at Ottoboni’s palace, and this was followed by the first performance of Handel’s oratorio *La Resurrezione* on Easter Sunday at the palace of the Marchese Ruspoli, Handel’s patron. Scarlatti resumed his old position in Naples in late 1708 and remained there for the rest of his life with only occasional visits to Rome.

Although Alessandro was primarily a composer of operas, cantatas, serenatas and oratorios, he also wrote a not-insignificant amount of church music. Most of these works are for chorus *a cappella* or with organ accompaniment in the conservative *stile antico*. A small number, however, are in the more modern concertato style, with chorus and solo voices accompanied by string orchestra. Among the latter the most important are the large-scale settings of the Mass and Vespers written in 1720 and 1721. Both were commissioned by Cardinal Acquaviva for the celebration of the Feast of St. Cecilia at the church of Santa Cecilia in Trastavere in Rome.

The *Gloria* from the Mass stands somewhere between the through-composed settings of the
17th century and the so-called “cantata mass” of the 18th century, which is divided into clear-cut movements, each with a different scoring and style. It is written for five voices (SSATB) accompanied by four-part string orchestra and basso continuo. In the faster sections the soloists tend to sing rapid roulades which that are answered by chordal interjections from the chorus. In the slower sections the chorus sings lyrical lines that produce expressive dissonances, generally created by suspensions. The only true aria is the “Gratias agimus,” in which the alto soloist is paired with an obligato line for the unison violins.

The “Cum Sancto Spiritu” that concludes the Gloria is a virtuosic choral fugue whose subject, a series of ascending pitches in longer note values, seems to be derived from the intonation of the plainsong Introit for the Feast of St. Cecilia, which Scarlatti quoted on his score.

Alessandro Scarlatti

Domenico Scarlatti: *Miserere in E Minor*
Alessandro’s son Domenico was Handel’s exact contemporary. A precociously talented youth, he spent his early career in Naples and Venice. He
is said to have engaged in a keyboard competition with the newly arrived Handel, after which it was concluded that the German was the superior organist but the Italian prevailed at the harpsichord.

After his father returned to Naples, Domenico flourished in Rome, becoming music master to Maria Casimira, the exiled Queen of Poland, from 1709 to 1714, and then maestro di cappella at the Capella Giulia. In 1719 he moved to Lisbon, becoming mestre to the Portuguese court chapel and harpsichord teacher to Princess Maria Barbara. When his pupil married the Spanish Crown Prince and moved to Madrid in 1728, Domenico accompanied her and spent the rest of his life at the Spanish court.

Domenico initially aspired to be a composer of secular vocal works like his father. Only after his move to Lisbon did he begin to concentrate on the composition of the keyboard sonatas that assured his lasting fame. Like his father, he also composed a certain amount of church music, especially during the years 1714-1728 when he held positions that required it. Almost all of his surviving sacred music is in the stile antico, his most famous work being a setting of the Stabat Mater for ten voices and organ.

The Miserere in E performed today was written for the Capella Giulia, and the lack of a Doxology indicates it was performed to conclude the service of Tenebrae on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week. It is an alternatim setting in which only the odd-numbered verses are sung polyphonically, while the even-numbered verses are chanted to the appropriate psalm tone.

**Alessandro Scarlatti:**

*Sdegno la fiamma estinse*

A number of Baroque composers, including Alessandro Scarlatti and Antonio Lotti, continued the Renaissance tradition of writing madrigals;

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**Arcangelo Corelli**

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Scarlatti wrote eight in all. These through-composed settings of secular texts were probably intended for ensembles of solo singers, perhaps accompanied by a discreet continuo group but possibly sung a cappella.

“Sdegno la fiamma estinse,” written for five voices (SSATB), is typical of the genre in its dramatic alternation of recitative-like chordal passages with sophisticated imitative sections, and in it use of melodic figures, dissonance and silence to convey the meaning of the text.

Corelli: Concerto grosso in D, Op. 6, No. 7

Arcangelo Corelli was the most famous and influential Italian violinist and composer of instrumental music in the latter part of the 17th century. His published collections of violin sonatas and trio sonatas circulated throughout Europe. At the time of Handel’s visit he had been for many years in the service of Cardinal Ottoboni, and he led the orchestra for Handel’s two Italian oratorios, *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* in May 1707 and *La Resurrezione* at Easter 1708.

Retiring from his performing career later in 1708, Corelli spent his remaining years assembling the collection of Concerti grossi eventually published as his Op. 6 in 1712. Some of these may have been newly composed, but many were revisions of works written and performed as early as the 1680s. Corelli’s Op. 6 Concerti grossi gained lasting popularity, especially in England, and Handel’s own Op. 6 was clearly modeled on Corelli’s set.

The form as conceived by Corelli was based on the contrast between a group of soloists, termed the concerto, with a larger body of strings, termed the concerto grosso. The concerto consisted of two violins and a single cello — often performed by Corelli himself, his student Matteo Fornari, and the Spanish cellist G.B.
Lulier. In the Corellian tradition, virtuosity takes second place to elegance and polish.

Concerto No. 7 in D begins with two fast movements, the first consisting mostly of chords and the second opening with fanfare-like figures in the concertino and closing with a chordal Adagio. The third movement is another Allegro, this time in binary form and built over a “walking bass.” The fourth movement, marked Andante largo, features short phrases tossed back and forth between the solo violins over a bass line that features octave leaps. The fifth movement is a fugue, and the concerto closes with a dance-like movement in triple meter.

Handel: No, di voi non vo’ fidarmi, HWV 189
The chamber duet, with a secular text sung by two singers accompanied by continuo, was cultivated by a number of Italian composers. One of the first things Handel seems to have done after he arrived in Italy was to acquire a manuscript of chamber duets composed by the master of the genre, Agostino Steffani. Curiously, this volume preserved the duet movements only, without the intervening recitative sections, and all the chamber duets that Handel subsequently composed reproduce this format.

The bulk of Handel’s chamber duets were composed in Italy or when he was Kapellmeister at the Electoral Court of Hanover between 1710 and 1712. However, at the beginning of July 1741 he composed two more duets, and these were followed by several others in 1742 and 1745. The circumstances and performers for whom these duets were written remain unknown.

Handel used the first and last movements of “No, di voi non vo’ fidarmi” — the second of these duets to have been written — as the basis for the choruses “For unto us a child is born” and “All we like sheep” in Messiah, which was drafted in August 1741.

Handel: Dixit Dominus, HWV 232
When Handel travelled to Italy to learn to compose in the Italian style, he presumably intended to concentrate on secular vocal and instrumental music. Nonetheless, the earliest large-scale work he produced was Dixit Dominus, a setting of
Psalm 109 in the Vulgate Bible. The autograph is dated April 1707 and scholars disagree as to who might have commissioned such a work. *Dixit Dominus* is scored for five soloists, five-part chorus (SSATB), and string orchestra and was presumably performed at Vespers on an appropriate festal occasion, perhaps even Easter.

There are so many wonderful moments in *Dixit Dominus* that it is difficult to know which to highlight. Almost every chorus is a contrapuntal tour de force, while “De torrente in via bibet” (“He shall drink from the brook by the road”), the penultimate duet for the soprano soloists accompanied by slowly changing chromatic harmonies in the strings, is one of Handel’s most sublime compositions. The closing Doxology, with its wide-ranging fugue subject, insistent countersubject, and even faster concluding section with octave-leaping “amens,” must have astonished all who first heard it.

*Dixit Dominus* is one of Handel’s youthful masterpieces, and the music reflects the styles and techniques he had observed in the music of the other composers on this program. The scale and sheer energy of the music are captivating, and while the solo writing is not as virtuosic as that found in several other of his Italian compositions, the technical demands on the choral singers and instrumentals are formidable. Handel condensed the music and tightened its structure when he reused some of it later in English works, but he never again matched the reckless abandon of his Italian calling card.

Notes by Graydon Beeks

This concert is dedicated to the memory of

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John Alexander, Artistic Director of Pacific Chorale since 1972, is one of America’s most respected choral conductors. His inspired leadership both on the podium and as an advocate for the advancement of the choral art has garnered national and international admiration and acclaim.

Alexander’s long and distinguished career has encompassed conducting hundreds of choral and orchestral performances nationally and in 27 countries around the globe. He has conducted his singers with orchestras throughout Europe, Asia, the former Soviet Union and South America and, closer to home, with Pacific Symphony, Pasadena Symphony, Musica Angelica and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. Equally versatile whether on the podium or behind the scenes, Alexander has prepared choruses for many of the world’s most outstanding orchestral conductors, including Zubin Mehta, Pierre Boulez, Seiji Ozawa, Michael Tilson Thomas, Leonard Slatkin, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Gustavo Dudamel, Lukas Foss, Max Rudolf, Carl St.Clair, Gerard Schwarz, Marin Alsop, John Mauceri, John Williams, and Keith Lockhart.

A proponent of contemporary American music, Alexander is noted for the strong representation of American works and composers in his programming. He has conducted many premieres of works by composers such as Jake Heggie, Morten Lauridsen, Eric Whitacre, Frank Ticheli, and James Hopkins.

Alexander is nationally recognized for his leadership in the musical and organizational development of the performing arts. He is a board member and former president of Chorus America, the service organization for choruses in North America. Alexander also has served on artistic review panels for national, statewide and local arts organizations, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

Alexander retired in spring 2006 from his position as Director of Choral Studies at California State University, Fullerton, having been awarded the honor of Professor Emeritus. From 1970 to 1996, he held the position of Director of Choral Studies at California State University, Northridge. Alexander continues his involvement in the pre-professional training of choral conductors. He is in demand as a teacher, clinician, and adjudicator in festivals, seminars and workshops across the United States. In 2003, Chorus America honored him with the establishment of the “John Alexander Conducting Faculty Chair” for their national conducting...
workshop program.

Alexander is a celebrated and prolific composer, and serves as the editor of the John Alexander Choral Series with Hinshaw Music. His numerous tributes and awards include the “Distinguished Faculty Member” award from California State University, Fullerton (2006); the Helena Modjeska Cultural Legacy Award (2003), presented in honor of his lifetime achievement as an artistic visionary in the development of the arts in Orange County; the “Outstanding Individual Artist” Award (2000) from Arts Orange County; the “Gershwin Award” (1990), presented by the county of Los Angeles in recognition of his cultural leadership in that city; and the “Outstanding Professor” Award (1976) from California State University, Northridge. In June 2008, Alexander received the “Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art” from Chorus America.

Elizabeth Blumenstock is one of the country’s leading Baroque violinists. A frequent concertmaster with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, Chicago Opera Theater, and the Italian ensemble Il Complesso Barocco, she is also a member of several of California’s finest period-instrument ensembles, including Musica Pacifica, Trio Galante, Trio Galanterie, the Arcadian Academy, and American Baroque. Her many acclaimed festival appearances include the Boston and Berkeley Early Music Festivals, Germany’s Goettingen Handel Festival, the Carmel Bach Festival, the Oulunsalo Soi festival (Finland), the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival.

An active and enthusiastic teacher, Blumenstock is an instructor at the International Baroque Institute at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and is on the teaching staff of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the University of Southern California, and UC Berkeley. She has taught at the Baroque Performance Institute at Oberlin and the Austrian Baroque Academy; has coached Baroque ensembles at Roosevelt University, the University of Virginia, and at the School for Music in Montevideo, Uruguay; and has served as organist and choir director at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Richmond, California.

Blumenstock has over 100 recordings to her credit across a range of distinguished labels, including Harmonia Mundi, Virgin Classics, Dorian, BMG, and Koch International, among others. The violin she plays — an Andrea Guarneri built in Cremona, Italy, in 1660 — is made available to her through the generosity of the Philharmonia Baroque Period Instrument Trust.
The John Alexander Singers, Pacific Chorale’s professional chamber choir, is a 24-voice ensemble of outstanding choral musicians from throughout Southern California. While most of these singers also serve as part of the paid core to Pacific Chorale’s 140-voice ensemble, their work with the John Alexander Singers focuses on specialized repertoire appropriate for a professional chamber chorus.

The Pacific Chorale regularly presents the John Alexander Singers in concert venues throughout Southern California. The Singers have enjoyed an extensive and fruitful collaboration with Musica Angelica, Southern California’s premier period instrument orchestra.

Some other notable collaborations include performances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic on their “Green Umbrella” new-music series, and performances with the Kronos Quartet, Mark Morris Dance Company, The Royal Ballet of Covent Garden, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Pacific Symphony.

The ensemble has served as the resident chorus for several arts festivals sponsored by the California State University system, including the Summer Arts Festivals at Humboldt State University and CSU Long Beach, and the California Conducting Symposium at CSU Fullerton. The John Alexander Singers have appeared as a featured chorus at the American Choral Directors Association conference in Los Angeles in 2000, Chorus America’s national conference in Los Angeles in June 2007, and the Association of California Symphony Orchestras’ annual conference in Costa Mesa in August 2007.

Pacific Chorale’s John Alexander Singers

Daniel Babcock, Tenor
Roger W. Johnson Memorial Chair
Aram Barsamian, Bass
Brandon Brack, Tenor
Carver Cossey, Bass
Joseph Cruz, Countertenor/Tenor
I-Chin Feinblatt, Alto
Jason Francisco, Countertenor
Laura Harrison, Alto
Kellee King, Soprano
Ricardo McKillips, Bass
Emmanuel Miranda, Bass
Maria Cristina Navarro, Soprano
Linda Williams Pearce, Soprano
Nicholas Preston, Tenor
Thomas Ringland, Bass
Zanaida Robles, Soprano/Alto
Katharin Rundus, Soprano
Jane Shim, Soprano/Alto
Gregorio Taniguchi, Tenor
Sarah Thompson, Soprano
Lorraine Joy Welling, Soprano

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Concertmistress
Amy Wang
Adriana Zoppo

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Sue Feldman
Joel Pargman
Carrie Kennedy

Violas
Ondine Young
Suzana Giordano-Gignac

Cello
Leif Woodward

Violone
Denise Briese

Organ/Harpsichord
Timothy Howard

Lute
Daniel Zuluaga

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Mark Ghiassi, Horn
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— Theocritus
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