



June 3, 2021 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ***A Bach Keyboard Extravaganza* featuring Matthew Dirst, harpsichordist & organist: Premiere streaming June 24, 2021.**

The Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar, collaborates with Ars Lyrica, Houston (co-producer) and San Francisco Early Music Society (co-presenter), to present this new immersive virtual concert film to the widest audience. Now in its 41<sup>st</sup> year, the Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar, is delighted to present this special summer concert that will receive its premiere streaming within the organization's typical yearly festival week. "**A Bach Keyboard Extravaganza**" explores and celebrates the music of J.S. Bach for harpsichord and organ, alongside that of Bach's key contemporaries.

Acclaimed American harpsichordist and organist **Matthew Dirst**, Ars Lyrica Houston's Artistic Director, who makes his Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar, debut with this release, states:

"I'm delighted to be sharing some of my favorite harpsichord and organ pieces with a virtual audience, thanks to an invitation from the Baroque Music Festival of Corona del Mar."

Specially filmed for this presentation, the performances and commentary were captured in May 2021 at the Rienzi wing (Decorative Arts) of the Houston Museum of Fine Art, and at St. Philip Presbyterian Church, Houston where Dirst is Music Director. After a brief introduction to Matthew by the BMF's artistic director Elizabeth Blumenstock, the performances will be interspersed with lively commentary on the composers, pieces, locations and instruments—including the wonderful 2020 "Gräbner" harpsichord by John Phillips (Berkeley, CA) complete with rich decoration by Janine Johnson. This collaborative creative project was made possible by a cultural arts grant from the City of Newport Beach, CA.

### **How to watch**

**YouTube Premiere: Thursday, June 24, 7:00 pm Pacific** (viewers are encouraged to subscribe to the Festival's YouTube channel <http://bit.ly/YouTubeBMFCdM> followed by:

**Zoom Q&A social hour: Thursday, June 24, 8:00 pm Pacific\***

**Streaming is free to view** as is participation in the Zoom after-party with the musicians.

**Donations are welcomed** at <https://bmf-cdm.org/>

*\*YouTube watch page and after-party Zoom link will be circulated in our e-newsletter a few days ahead of the premiere streaming. Concert viewers may join our e-mailing list to receive the links at: <http://bit.ly/BMFmailinglist>*

### **Program**

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750): Prelude and Fugue in B-flat Major BWV 866**

**Nicolas de Grigny (1672-1703): Excerpts from the *Livre d'Orgue***

*Dialogue à 2 Tailles de Cromorne et 2 dessus de Cornet; Dialogue de Flûtes; Dialogue sur les Grands jeux*

**Bach: Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Major BWV 852**

**Bach: Two Cantata Transcriptions, transcribed by M. Dirst**

*Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe BWV 156/1; Valet will ich dir geben BWV 95/3*

**Johann Ludwig Krebs (1713-1780): Trio in E-flat Major *Adagio; Un poco Allegro***

**Bach: Prelude and Fugue in A Minor BWV 865**

**Nikolaus Bruhns (1665-1697): Praeludium in G Major**

## **Performer Biography**

**Matthew Dirst** is the first American musician to win major international prizes in both organ and harpsichord, including the American Guild of Organists National Young Artist Competition and the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition. Widely admired for his stylish playing and conducting, he was recently described in the *Washington Post* as an “efficient, extremely precise conductor who has an ear for detail and up-to-date ideas about performing Bach.” *Early Music America* hailed his solo recording of harpsichord works by François and Armand-Louis Couperin, as a “stylish, tasteful, and technically commanding performance... expressive and brilliant playing.” As Artistic Director of Ars Lyrica Houston, Dirst leads a period-instrument ensemble with several acclaimed recordings, one of which—J. A. Hasse’s *Marc Antonio e Cleopatra*—was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2011 for Best Opera. His degrees include a PhD in musicology from Stanford University and the *prix de virtuosité* in both organ and harpsichord from the Conservatoire National de Reuil-Malmaison, France, where he spent two years as a Fulbright scholar. Equally active as a scholar and as an organist, Dirst is Professor of Music at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, and Organist at St Philip Presbyterian Church in Houston. His publications include *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marburg to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), *Bach and the Organ* (University of Illinois Press, 2016), and a forthcoming book on Bach’s *Art of Fugue* and *Musical Offering*.

## **Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar**

The Baroque Music Festival was founded in 1981 by Dr. Burton Karson, Professor of Music at CSU Fullerton and has been led by its current artistic director, violinist Elizabeth Blumenstock, since 2011. The annual season of five June concerts—which the festival plans to resume June 19-26, 2022—is frequently focused on significant musical themes or events. Over the past four decades, the Festival has evolved as both an esteemed and popular cultural institution in Orange County, CA. Performing primarily on period instruments in intimate settings, acclaimed instrumentalists and vocal soloists typically assemble each June in Corona del Mar for the annual Festival.

Concertgoers have described the performances as “rapturous” and “riveting”; reviews from the *Los Angeles Times*, *Orange County Register* and other local publications have praised the Festival throughout its long and illustrious history. The organization’s all-volunteer Board of Directors remains committed to bringing high-quality Baroque music to Corona del Mar every summer.

### **“A Bach Keyboard Extravaganza” press inquiries:**

**Elizabeth Blumenstock and Matthew Dirst are available for video call, phone, and email interviews on request, schedule permitting.** Contact: Zen Edwards, Executive Director • cell (310) 227-0539 • [press@bmf-cdm.org](mailto:press@bmf-cdm.org)

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