FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA PRESENTS DECEMBER PERFORMANCES OF BACH’S MASS IN B MINOR AND HANDEL’S MESSIAH IN BAY AREA AND LOS ANGELES

November 10, 2011, San Francisco, CA – This December, Music Director Nicholas McGegan and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra will perform Bach’s Mass in B Minor in four Bay Area performances as part of the regular subscription season. In addition, the Ensemble performs Handel’s Messiah in special performances presented by Cal Performances in Berkeley’s Zellerbach Hall and on tour to Los Angeles for two performances at Disney Hall presented by the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

A work that spanned his entire career, Bach’s Mass in B Minor was hailed in 1818 as "the greatest musical artwork of all times and all people" by Swiss composer Hans George Nageli. Although the piece was assembled in its entirety in 1749, just one year before Bach’s death, the individual movements were written during different periods of the composer’s life. Bach never heard a complete performance of the work. Today, the work is widely regarded as one of the most beautiful pieces of classical music, full of various styles and tones.

Four soloists will help bring the mass to life. The “luminous” soprano Sherezade Panthaki, who “floats her arias with pure, penetrating tone,” (The New York Times) will make her debut performance with the orchestra. Panthaki will be joined by countertenor Daniel Taylor, whose international career spans everything from early to contemporary music. The Wall Street Journal praises his “expressive, silvery alto.” Also appearing are tenor Thomas Cooley ("cool, fleet-footed contributions” – The San Francisco Chronicle) and baritone Nathaniel Watson (“customarily amazing, his baritone authoritative” – The Vancouver Sun). Finally, the musicians will be joined by the Philharmonia Chorale, which “continues to grow and flourish under the leadership of chorus director Bruce Lamott” (San Francisco Chronicle).
Three of these four soloists will be featured in three performances of Handel’s *Messiah* in December. Soprano Dominique Labelle will join Taylor, Cooley, and Watson for one performance at Berkeley’s Zellerbach Hall on December 10 at 7 PM (presented by Cal Performances), and two performances at Los Angeles’ Disney Hall on December 13 and 14 at 7:30 PM (presented by the Los Angeles Philharmonic).

For more information, visit [www.philharmonia.org](http://www.philharmonia.org) or call (415) 252-1288.

**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**WHO**
Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra
Nicholas McGegan, *conductor*
Sherezade Panthaki, *soprano*
Daniel Taylor, *countertenor*
Thomas Cooley, *tenor*
Nathaniel Watson, *baritone*
Philharmonia Chorale, Bruce Lamott, *director*

**WHAT**
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)
Mass in B minor, BWV 232

**WHEN/WHERE**
Friday, December 2 at 8 PM
  San Francisco – Herbst Theatre (401 Van Ness Avenue)
Saturday, December 3 at 8 PM
  Berkeley – First Congregational Church (2345 Channing Way)
Sunday, December 4 at 7:30 PM
  Berkeley – First Congregational Church (2345 Channing Way)
Tuesday, December 6 at 8 PM
  Palo Alto – First United Methodist Church (625 Hamilton Avenue)

**TICKETS**
Tickets are priced at $25 to $100 and are available through City Box Office at (415) 392-4400 or online at [www.cityboxoffice.com](http://www.cityboxoffice.com). If available, Student Rush tickets are $10 and go on sale one hour before the start of the concerts.

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Saturday, December 10 at 7:30 PM  
Berkeley – Zellerbach Hall (University of California campus)

Tuesday, December 13 at 7:30 PM  
Los Angeles – Disney Hall (111 South Grand Avenue)

Wednesday, December 14 at 7:30 PM  
Los Angeles – Disney Hall (111 South Grand Avenue)

TICKETS  
Tickets for December 10 are available through Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or online at [http://www.calperformances.org/](http://www.calperformances.org/); tickets for December 13 and 14 are available through LA Phil at (323) 850-2000 or online at [http://www.laphil.com/](http://www.laphil.com/).

To learn more about all of Philharmonia Baroque’s concerts, visit the Orchestra’s website at [www.philharmonia.org](http://www.philharmonia.org).

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 Times 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, 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.

The Orchestra has had numerous successful collaborations with celebrated musicians, composers, and choreographers. 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, the orchestra launched its own label, Philharmonia Baroque Productions, with an acclaimed recording of Berlioz' Les Nuits d'été and Handel arias featuring mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson.

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

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 18th-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.

The most recent additions to his discography of more than 100 releases include three releases from Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra under their new label, Philharmonia Baroque Productions (PBP): Berlioz' *Les Nuits d'été* and selected Handel arias with the late Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, Haydn Symphonies nos. 88, 101 and 104, and Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* and other concerti with Elizabeth Blumenstock as violin soloist.

**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 preparing 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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For a complete biography, visit www.philharmonia.org/about/history/. Press photos are available at www.philharmonia.org/press-room/resources.

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