



## Sunday, February 12 at 6pm

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MATTHEW DIRST
Artistic Director

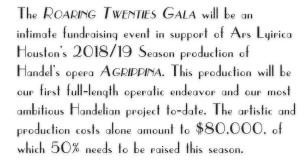
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## ROBIN ANGLY & MILES SMITH

Saturday, March 11, 2017

- ESPERSON -

Downtown Houston, Texas



The musical program for the gala will feature acclaimed countertenor John Holiday, Ars Lyrica Artistic Director Matthew Dirst at the harpsichord, plus violinist Elizabeth Blumenstock and viola da gambist Mary Springfels in a festive mix of music from the 1720s and the 1920s—Handel meets the jazz age!



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#### FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Good evening and welcome to *Scalable Heights*, Ars Lyrica's salute to the late Baroque cult of the virtuoso. On the program are works that famously extended the reach and capabilities of the harpsichord, natural trumpet, and voice, all while providing multiple challenges for the accompanying strings, too. We're delighted to welcome back Baroque trumpet specialist Nathaniel Mayfield and introduce soprano Sherezade Panthaki, who makes her Ars Lyrica Houston debut this evening.

Ars Lyrica offers two additional subscription programs during Spring 2017. On April 2 we'll be exploring Classical Spectres with a setting of the Pygmalion story by J. C. F. Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven's "Ghost" Trio, among other works. Don Quixote's Excellent Adventures, our festive season finale on May 21, celebrates Miguel de Cervantes' great literary character with music by Purcell, Boismortier, and Telemann and a special appearance by the Crumhorn Collective. We look forward to sharing these rarely heard gems with you, and offer warm thanks for your patronage and support, which make all this possible.



Marshew DV72

MATTHEW DIRST

## **PROGRAM**

Concerto in D minor for Harpsichord and Strings, BWV 1052

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725)

Su le sponde del Tebro

Sinfonia

Recitative: Su le sponde del Tebro Aria: Contentatevi, o fidi pensieri Recitative: Mesto, stanco e spirante

Arioso: Infelici miei lumi Aria: Dite almeno, astri crudeli Recitative: All'aura, al cielo Aria: Tralascia pur di piangere

See texts & translations on pages 6-9.

## INTERMISSION

Sonata in D minor, RV 63 ("La Follia")

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen, BWV 51

J. S. Bach

Aria: Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen! Recitative: Wir beten zu dem Tempel an

Aria: Höchster, mache deine Güte Chorale: Sei Lob und Preis mit Ehren

Aria: Alleluja!

See texts & translations on pages 6-9.

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

Bach's D-minor Concerto, BWV 1052, has long been the subject of musicological "detective" work. Though given pride of place at the head of Bach's autograph score of six harpsichord concertos (c.1738), it is considered by many to be an arrangement of a lost violin concerto. Thus scholars attributed its violin-like figuration to a precursor that vanished during various re-workings of the same material, notably as sinfonias to various Leipzig church cantatas from the late 1720s featuring organ in the solo role. To this way of thinking, the precise character of its virtuosity is the central question: does the solo part seem better suited to violin or keyboard playing?

That's a seemingly straightforward question, but without prior works on which to base an opinion about the advent of a keyboard concerto style, how does one decide? Recent scholarly work proposes a different alternative that neatly skirts the issue. Bach's earliest versions of this and several sister works may have been as concertos he debuted in a famous recital on the new Silbermann organ at St Sophia Church in Dresden in 1725. This scenario means that Bach was thinking about the incipient keyboard concerto as a fairly plastic genre, one that could be adapted easily from one instrument to another, and—perhaps most significantly—well before anyone else so radically transformed the continuo player's usual role in the ensemble. With its two large, imposing *Allegro* movements and probing central *Adagio*, BWV 1052 makes no bones about its composer's ambition: the keyboard concerto was here to stay.

A master of vocal idioms large and small, Alessandro Scarlatti catered to star singers and their devoted public with over 100 operas, 600 cantatas, and 30 oratorios over the course of a long and productive career. This prodigious output—even when compared to that of Handel, Telemann, or Bach—defined the Italian vocal style for most of the eighteenth century. The majority of Scarlatti cantatas call for just solo voice and continuo, but a few exceptional works like *Su le sponde del Tebro* require a full complement of strings plus occasional

obbligato instruments. This particular work showcases two virtuoso soloists, with soprano and trumpet engaging in highly spirited play in the first and final arias in particular.

Likely composed in Rome in the 1690s, *Su le sponde del Tebro* tells a familiar story, of the beautiful but heartless shepherdess Clori who betrays her lover Aminta. The latter's litany of complaints found a sympathetic ear in Signor Scarlatti, who, doubtless inspired by the reference to "trumpets" in the first aria's second strophe, uses this instrument as a foil for the poor shepherd's broken heart. Aminta's grief is more conventionally expressed in the highly dissonant arioso "Infelici miei lumi," whose murky middle style (somewhere between recitative and aria) captures perfectly the idea of an intensely private emotional breakdown.

For his "La Follia" Sonata for two violins and continuo, RV 63 (Op. 1, No. 12), Antonio Vivaldi took his inspiration from Arcangelo Corelli's solo violin sonata based on the same venerable progression. A standard set of chords, dubbed the "folia" (or "follies") since it arose in Spain as a peasant dance, this 16-measure pattern inspired centuries of music-making and countless composers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries especially. Such a piece operates the same way as a jazz blues: one repeats a basic pattern multiple times, adding all manner of changing figuration along the way. Like many settings of this bass line, Vivaldi's "La Follia" begins modestly, with a simple statement of the two large phrases of this harmonic ostinato. Repetitions of the entire pattern get steadily more complex as the work progresses, with distinct figuration and tempos for each variation and ever more powerful musical fireworks.

Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen, BWV 51, received its first performance in Leipzig on 17 September 1730, though the exceptionally clean appearance of its autograph score suggests that, for this occasion, Bach adapted a work he had written earlier, perhaps for the birthday of Duke of Weißenfels in February 1729. Unusually, its title wrapper carries the designation "per ogni tempo" ("for any occasion"), a notation that has proved prescient: Cantata 51 is now one of a handful of Bach cantatas that appears regularly on concert programs.

Whatever its precise origins, the work's fame is richly deserved. *Jauchzet Gott* is the only church cantata by Bach with florid coloratura for both soprano and trumpet, who both must ascend repeatedly to high C above the staff, a note rarely seen in Baroque music. The identity of Bach's trumpet player has long been known: Leipzig town musician Gottfried Reiche (1667-1734), the great trumpet player of his era, was apparently still playing well in his early 60s. But who sang this piece at its 1730 première? The cantata makes demands well beyond the abilities of Bach's boy sopranos at the Leipzig Thomaschule. Two opera singers from the nearby Dresden court are mentioned in the literature as possibilities: the soprano Faustina Bordoni Hasse, wife of the composer Johann Adolph Hasse, and the soprano castrato Giovanni Bindi. Given Hasse's 1731 arrival in Dresden and her well-known preference for roles that ascend only to high A (not C), the Venetian castrato seems the most likely candidate.

For this work an unknown librettist cobbled together a text with allusions to various Psalms and passages from Matthew's Gospel for the 15th Sunday after Trinity, plus a chorale verse from "Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren" (1530) and a concluding "Alleluia." Its musical textures range just as widely, from operatic flamboyance in the opening and closing arias to intimate pastoral-like writing in the second aria. Perhaps most unusual is the penultimate movement, in which a simple chorale verse is surrounded by a vigorous instrumental trio that seems to take no notice of it.

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Tonight's program is part of the 2017 Houston Early Music Festival. More details available at: HOUSTONEARLYMUSICFESTIVAL.ORG

## TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

## Su le sponde del Tebro-Alessandro Scarlatti

## Sinfonia

## Recitative

Su le sponde del Tebro ove le Dee latine fecero à gl'Archi

lor corde del crine. colà, Aminta il fido da Clori vilipeso

con dolore infinito disse al ciel, disse al mondo, io son tradito!

On the banks of the Tiber, where Roman goddesses made their bows from strings in their tresses, there faithful Aminta, scorned by Clori, with endless sorrow declared to heaven and the world: I am betrayed!

#### Aria

Contentatevi, o fidi pensieri, trattenervi per guardie al mio core. Che gl'affanni giganti guerrieri dan' l'assalto et è duce il dolore.

Oricalchi di mesti sospiri segno danno d'attacco potente ed a truppe i tiranni martiri fanno breccia al'mio seno innocente.

## Recitative

Mesto, stanco e spirante dal duol che l'opprimea, rivolto a gl'occhi suoi, così dicea:

## Arioso

Infelici miei lumi, già che soli noi siamo, aprite il varco al pianto e concedete al core che tramandi su gl'occhi il mio dolore.

Be content, faithful thoughts, bring calm and watch over my heart. For incalculable misfortunes assualt me. with sorrow in the lead.

Brazen trumpets, your sad sighs signal a potent attack, and troops of tyrannical martyrs breach my innocent heart.

Sad, weary and expiring, with sorrow oppressing him, he opens his eyes and says:

Unhappy eyes of mine, now we are alone. open yourselves to my tears, and allow my heart to share my sorrow with you.

#### Aria

Dite almeno, astri crudeli. quando mai vi offese il petto, che ricetto voi lo fate di dolore. E già martire d'amore nelle lagrime fedeli a sperar solo è costretto.

Dite almeno, astri crudeli...

Dimmi, o ciel, se de miei danni, sono satie ancor le sfere che sì fiere à penar m'han destinato? Crudo ciel, perfido fato, Con saette più mortali del mio sen fate l'arciere. Dimmi, o ciel, se de' miei mali...

Tell me, cruel stars... Tell me, O heaven, if my ills are enough for the stars who destined me for such suffering? Cruel heaven, wicked fate, with arrows more deadly

Tell me, cruel stars.

This martyr to love,

whose faithful tears

are his only hope.

when I am this heartbroken,

what remedy you have for sorrow.

Tell me, O heaven, if my ills...

than my own fatal archer.

#### Recitative

All'aura, al cielo, à i venti pastorello gentil così parlava, e pur l'aura crudel fido adorava.

Ma conscendo al fine che nè pianti, nè preghi, sapevano addolcire un cor di sasso, risoluto e costante così disse al cor schernito, schernito amante:

## To the breeze, to heaven, to the winds the gentle shepherd spoke thus, and then paid homage to the cruel zephyr.

But finally understanding that neither weeping nor prayers would soften a heart of stone. resolute and constant he spoke to his scorned heart and mistress:

#### Aria

Tralascia pur di piangere, povero afflito cor. Che sprezzato dal tuo fato non ti resta che compiangere d'un infida il suo rigor.

Tralascia pur di piangere... Non ti curar di vivere. misero nel mio sen. Chè spietata Clori ingrata hà per uso il saper fingere e negl'occhi il bel seren.

Non ti curar di vivere...

Cease your weeping, O afflicted heart. Though disdained by fate, you still must lament your faithless lover's cruelty. Cease your weeping... You cannot live with a broken heart. For pitiless, ungrateful Clori feigns understanding and in her eyes, fair serenity. You cannot live...

## Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen-J. S. Bach

#### Aria

Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen! Was der Himmel und die Welt an Geschöpfen in sich hält, müssen dessen Ruhm erhöhen, und wir wollen unserm Gott gleichfalls itzt ein Opfer bringen, daß er uns in Kreuz und Not allezeit hat beigestanden.

Praise God in every land!
In heaven and on earth,
all living creatures
should exult in God's glory;
and now we, too, shall bring
an offering to our God,
since He, through suffering and pain,
has at all times stood by us.

## Recitative

Wir beten zu dem Tempel a, da Gottes Ehre wohnet, da dessen Treu, so täglich neu, mit lauter Segen lohnet. Wir preisen, was er an uns hat getan. Muß gleich der schwache Mund von seinen Wundern lallen, so kann ein schlechtes Lob ihm dennoch wohlgefallen. We pray at your temple, where God's honor dwells, and where His faithfulness, which is daily renewed, dispenses purest bliss.

We praise what He has done for us. Even though our feeble lips babble before His wonders, our humble praise still pleases Him.

#### Aria

Höchster, mache deine Güte ferner alle Morgen neu. So soll vor die Vatertreu auch ein dankbares Gemüte durch ein frommes Leben weisen, daß wir deine Kinder heißen. O Divine One, make Your goodness be renewed every morning. Then, thanks to your fatherly love, our grateful spirits in return show though a virtuous life that we are indeed your children.

## Chorale

Sei Lob und Preis mit Ehren Gott Vater, Sohn, Heiligem Geist!

Der woll in uns vermehren, was er uns aus Gnaden verheißt, daß wir ihm fest vertrauen, gänzlich uns lass'n auf ihn, Glory and praise, with honor be to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

May he increase in us that which He promised through grace, so that we trust Him always, rely fully on Him,

von Herzen auf ihn bauen, daß uns'r Herz, Mut und Sinn ihm festiglich anhangen; drauf singen wir zur Stund: Amen, wir werdn's erlangen, glaub'n wir aus Herzensgrund. and make Him our foundation, so that our heart, mind, and will remain devoted to Him.
And so now we sing:
Amen, all this shall be, this we believe wholeheartedly.

## Aria

Alleluja!

Alleluia!

## **ARTISTIC PERSONNEL**

#### ARS LYRICA HOUSTON

Matthew Dirst, Artistic Director

#### **SCALABLE HEIGHTS ARTISTS**

Sherezade Panthaki	soprano	Barrett Sills	cello
Nathaniel Mayfield	natural trumpet	Deborah Dunham	violone
Brandi Berry	violin	Michael Leopold	theorbo
Kurt Johnson	violin	Matthew Dirst	harpsichord &
Erika Lawson	viola		conductor

Special thanks to St Philip Presbyterian Church and the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, for providing rehearsal space for this program.

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**



Soprano Sherezade Panthaki's international success has been fueled by superbly honed musicianship; "shimmering sensitivity" (Cleveland Plain Dealer), "astonishing coloratura with radiant top notes" (Calgary Herald); a vocal color "combining brilliance with a dark, plumlike tone" (The Wall Street Journal), and passionately informed interpretations, "mining deep emotion from the subtle shaping of the lines" (The New York Times). An acknowledged star in the early-music field,

Ms. Panthaki has developed strong collaborations with many of the world's leading interpreters including Nicholas McGegan, Simon Carrington, the late John Scott, Mark Morris, Matthew Halls, Nicholas Kraemer, and Masaaki Suzuki, with whom she made her New York Philharmonic debut in a program of Bach and Mendelssohn.

Highlights of her current and recent seasons include Handel's Messiah with Bach Collegium Japan (Tokyo), National Symphony Orchestra (Kennedy Center, Washington D.C.), National Arts Center Orchestra (Ottawa, Canada), Calgary Symphony, and Nashville Symphony; Handel and Bach oratorios with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in San Francisco; several productions with the Mark Morris Dance Group, including Handel's L'allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato, Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, and the title role of Galatea in the company's premiere performances of Handel's Acis and Galatea; Handel's Saul with the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra in Toronto; Orff's Carmina Burana with the Houston Symphony; Bach's St. John Passion, St. Matthew Passion, and Brahms Requiem with the late John Scott and the Choir and Orchestra of St. Thomas Fifth Avenue, New York City; numerous Bach cantatas and Mozart Requiem with Music of the Baroque (Chicago); Handel's Solomon with the Radio Kamer Filharmonie in Holland; Handel at Carnegie Hall with William Christie and the Yale Philharmonia; Bach's Christmas Oratorio and solo cantatas with the Orchestra of St. Luke's in New York city; Mozart's Exsultate, jubilate and Requiem with the Washington Bach Consort (Washington D.C.); and solo concerts of Bach, Handel, and Vivaldi cantatas with the Rebel Baroque Orchestra. She is a frequent soloist with the most accomplished early music ensembles in New York, including the Choir and Orchestra of Trinity Church Wall Street (with whom she performed on a Grammy nominated recording).

Born and raised in India, Ms. Panthaki holds an Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music and the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, where she won multiple awards, including the prestigious Phyllis Curtin Career Entry Prize, awarded to launch the career of a student who demonstrates exceptional promise and talent as an artist. She earned a Masters degree from the University of Illinois and a Bachelors degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College.

Ms. Panthaki is an active and passionate music educator, frequently called upon to present vocal masterclasses at Universities and Arts Schools across the United States. She teaches as an adjunct voice professor at Yale University.



Originally from Austin, TX, Nathaniel Mayfield was awarded a four-year scholarship to study trumpet at Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, MI. At age 18, he competed in the Young Arts Talent Search sponsored by the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, and was one of 20 high school artists chosen to receive the prestigious Presidential Scholarship in the Arts from President Bill Clinton, an honor that included a Rose Garden ceremony and solo performance

in the Kennedy Center. After acceptance into both The Juilliard School and Columbia University, Mr. Mayfield graduated after three years of studies with Professor Raymond Mase (Chairman of the Juilliard Brass Department), and earned a BA in Classical History from Columbia. Other awards and honors included first prizes in The National Trumpet Competition, The Aspen Music Festival Concerto Competition, and the International Trumpet Guild Solo Competition.

Mr. Mayfield went on to receive a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue graduate work with Professor Reinhold Friedrich in Karlsruhe, Germany. During this time, he won positions in music festivals such as The Round Top Institute, National Repertory Orchestra, and The Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo Japan, as well as performed with a variety of professional orchestras including Tenerife Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony, Des Moines Metro Opera, and Mannheim Opera.

A world-renowned baroque trumpet soloist, Mr. Mayfield has presented masterclasses at such institutions as: The Juilliard School, Eastman School of Music, Laval University in Quebec, UT Austin, Baylor, TCU, Lausanne Conservatory Switzerland, and many others. Further, he was a three-year assistant at The Chosen Vale International Trumpet Seminar in Enfield, NH, faculty member of the Domaine Forget Brass Academy Quebec, and has participated in international trumpet competitions Kiev, Ukraine; Paris, France; Markneukirchen, Germany; and Bad-Säckingen, Germany.

Upon returning to Austin, Mr. Mayfield founded the Lake Austin Strings booking agency and the Austin Brass Institute (a 501-c3 non-profit), joined the faculties of Texas A&M University in College Station and Concordia University, performed frequently with the Austin Symphony, Austin Lyric Opera, and Austin Chorus, and served on the Board of Directors at the Austin School for the Performing and Visual Arts before being named its Artistic Director.

In addition to his performance schedule with numerous period instrument ensembles, Mr. Mayfield is President of Mayfield Energy, LLC (an oil and gas exploration and production company), Director of Sales and Marketing at Mayfield Dairy Queens, and recently completed an Executive MBA at the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas at Austin.

Mr. Mayfield lives in Austin with his wife, Ulrike, and their three daughters Elizabeth, Charlotte and Rebecca.

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Ars Lyrica Founder & Artistic Director 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 (1990) and the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition (1993). Widely admired for his stylish playing and conducting, the *Dallas Morning News* recently praised his "clear and evocative conducting" of Handel's *Alexander's Feast*, which

"yielded a performance as irresistibly lively as it was stylish." Dirst's recordings with Ars Lyrica have earned a Grammy nomination and widespread critical acclaim. 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. He is the author of Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marpurg to Mendelssohn (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and the editor of Bach and the Organ (University of Illinois Press, 2016).



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Founded in 1998 by harpsichordist and conductor Matthew Dirst, Ars Lyrica Houston presents a diverse array of music from the 17th and 18th centuries on period instruments. Its local subscription series, according to the Houston Chronicle, "sets the agenda" for early music in Houston and it also appears regularly at major festivals and conferences, including the 2014 Berkeley Early Music Festival & Exhibition. Ars Lyrica's distinctive programming favors Baroque dramatic and chamber works, and its pioneering efforts have won international acclaim: the ensemble's world première recording of Johann Adolf Hasse's *Marc'Antonio e Cleopatra*, hailed by Early Music America as "a thrilling performance that glows in its quieter moments and sparkles with vitality," was nominated for a Grammy Award® for Best Opera 2011.

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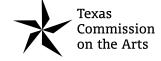




















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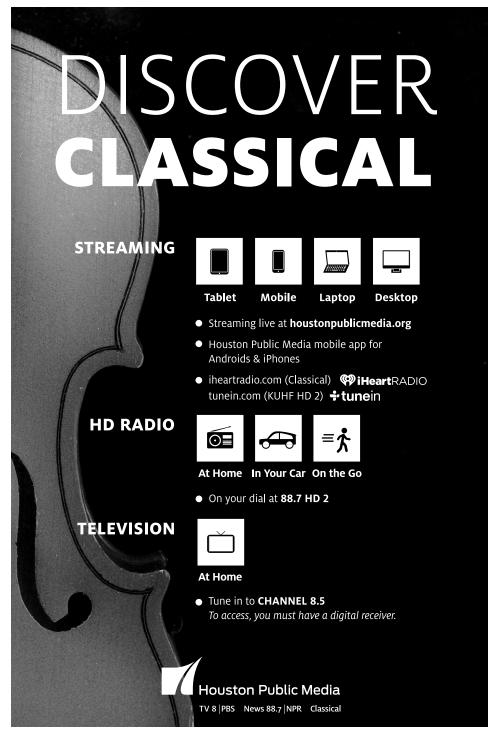
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## ARS LYRICA'S NEXT PERFORMANCE:



A keen interest in the uncanny can be seen in a number of musical works from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, including vocal and instrumental works from this transitional age by J. C. F. Bach and Beethoven.

#### SOLOISTS



Thomas Meglioranza baritone



Adam LaMotte violin



Barrett Sills cello



Matthew Dirst fortepiano

## SUNDAY, APRIL 2 AT 6 PM

Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts