

# SOUNDbytes

*Orpheus Britannicus* – Handel in England was the overarching theme of May’s **Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen 2008**. Central features of the festival, under the artistic direction of Nicholas McGegan, were performances of the opera *Orlando* (directed by Catherine Turocy of The New York Baroque Dance Company) and the oratorios *Samson* and *L’Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*. The festival also offered the modern world premiere of a hitherto unknown arrangement by Mendelssohn of Handel’s English masque *Acis and Galatea*. This premiere performance was recorded for release in 2008, in cooperation with the Carus-Verlag (Stuttgart).

Antonio Caldara’s *Missa*

*Commemorationis*, composed for the imperial court of Vienna in 1729, had its U.S. premiere in March 2008 in Houston, TX. Working from a text prepared by Brian W. Pritchard, Antoine Plante conducted **Mercury Baroque** and members of the Canadian choir **Les Voix Baroques**, including countertenor Matthew White, soprano Shannon Mercer, tenor Colin Balzer, and bass Sumner Thompson.

**Opera Lafayette** explored 17th- and 18th-century Italian music on the theme of Don Giovanni in a March concert at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Washington, DC. Artistic director Ryan Brown created a program that included scenes and excerpts from Mozart and Da Ponte’s mas-

terpiece and its Italian fore-runners, including *L’empio punito* by Melani, Gluck’s ballet *Don Juan*, and *Il Convitato di Pietra* by Gazzaniga and Bertati, Mozart and Da Ponte’s immediate model. The performance also included the modern world premiere of a scene from Albertini’s *Don Juan, or The Rake Punished*. A manuscript of this music was brought to Brown’s attention by Dr. Charles Russell, author of *The Don Juan Legend before Mozart*, and Opera Lafayette created a performing edition for this premiere.

The November Classics Series concert “Baroque Pearls,” by the **San Diego Chamber Orchestra**, included a surprise for the audience. As the concert neared the end, maestro Jung-Ho Pak led his forces in a performance of a Baroque overture – and fol-

lowed it with the announcement that the young composer, **Roberto (Bobby) José Bancalari**, was in attendance! The audience was mesmerized as Bancalari, a mandolin player from Long Beach, CA, explained why he loves Baroque music and how “cool” it was to hear his composition performed for the first time by an orchestra.

## Concerts of Note

The **Catacoustic Consort** (Cincinnati, OH) prefaced its February performance of François Couperin’s *Lamentations of Jeremiab* with an interfaith and interdisciplinary workshop bringing together the liturgical, musical, theoretical, and historical contexts of the work.

April’s weather was particularly dramatic in Chappaqua, NY, as **Ars Antigua** presented

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