

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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