

Pacific Chorale

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PACIFIC CHORALE TO PRESENT BACH'S *ST. JOHN PASSION*

Concert on April 11th—Holy Saturday—to Feature the John Alexander Singers, Musica Angelica and Pacific Chorale at the Orange County Performing Arts Center

**Baroque Specialist Aaron Sheehan Narrates as “The Evangelist”;
Baritones Hugh Davies and Ralph Cato Perform the Roles of Jesus and Pilate**

Santa Ana, CA, March 9, 2009 – Pacific Chorale’s 2008–2009 concert season concludes April 11th at the Orange County Performing Arts Center’s Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at Segerstrom Center for the Arts with Bach’s *St. John Passion*. The concert, sponsored in part by Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons, will feature Pacific Chorale’s 24-voice professional chamber choir, the John Alexander Singers, and period instrument ensemble Musica Angelica, echoing the performing forces of Bach’s day. Members of the larger Pacific Chorale ensemble will take the role of the congregation in this Holy Saturday presentation. Featured soloists include tenor Aaron Sheehan as the Evangelist, and baritones Hugh Davies and Ralph Cato as Jesus and Pilate, respectively. One hour prior to the performance, Dr. Robert M. Istad, Director of Choral Studies at Cal State Fullerton and Assistant Conductor of Pacific Chorale, will provide insights into Bach’s work and its performance in an onstage concert preview.

ST. JOHN PASSION

Saturday, April 11, 2009 at 1:00 pm

Concert preview with Dr. Robert M. Istad at 12:00 p.m.

Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, Orange County Performing Arts Center

John Alexander Singers • Musica Angelica • Pacific Chorale

Aaron Sheehan, Evangelist • Hugh Davies, Jesus • Ralph Cato, Pilate

John Alexander, conducting

J. S. Bach

St. John Passion, BWV 245

Co-presented with the Philharmonic Society of Orange County.

The John Alexander Singers and Pacific Chorale conclude the 2008-2009 season with Bach’s *St. John Passion*, joined by longtime collaborator Musica Angelica in a dramatic period-style performance of this monumental work. Bach’s Passion settings were designed for church performance, with the congregation

expected to join in singing the chorale hymns that punctuate the story of Christ's suffering and death. Sixty-six members of Pacific Chorale's symphonic chorus will join the John Alexander Singers for these chorales, providing an ongoing theological and devotional commentary on the narrative. Baroque specialist Aaron Sheehan will sing the demanding narrative part of the Evangelist, joined by baritone Hugh Davies in the central role of Jesus and Ralph Cato as the conflicted Pontius Pilate. Supertitles, lighting and staging will amplify the dramatic impact of one of Bach's greatest works.

Tenor **Aaron Sheehan** (Evangelist) is part of a new generation of Early Music vocalists that performs in projects ranging from Medieval to 20th Century music. His voice has been described by *Opera News* as "sinuous and supple," and the Boston Globe says he "sings with musical charm and vocal aplomb." He has appeared as soloist with Tragicomedia, Concerto Palatino, New York Collegium, American Bach Soloists, Handel and Haydn Society, Aston Magna Festival, Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Clarion Music Society, Boston Cecilia, American Opera Theater, Intermezzo Chamber Opera, and the Lyra Concert Baroque Orchestra. His singing has taken him to many festivals including Tanglewood, Boston Early Music Festival, Regensburg Early Music Festival, Washington DC Early Music Festival, and Monadnock Summer Music Festival. He has recorded and toured the U.S. and Europe with Paul Hillier's ensemble, Theater of Voices, with which he still performs, Blue Heron Renaissance Choir, Fortune's Wheel, and La Donna Musicale. Mr. Sheehan teaches voice at both Wellesley College and Brown University.

Hugh Davies (Jesus) was born and educated in England, and started his singing career as a boy chorister at St. Albans Abbey under the direction of Peter Hurford and Simon Preston. While a student at Cambridge University, he was a Choral Scholar at King's College, where the director of music was David Willcocks. As a professional singer based in London, he appeared with Glyndebourne Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and performed as a soloist with leading choirs and orchestras throughout Europe. He was a member of the Monteverdi Choir, the Schütz Choir and the John Alldis Choir, and made many recordings and broadcasts on television and radio. Mr. Davies now sings in the San Francisco area both as a soloist and as a member of several professional ensembles, and has appeared with groups such as Theatre of Voices, American Bach Soloists, California Bach Society, Magnificat, Albany Consort, San Francisco Bach Choir, Santa Rosa Symphony and Sonoma County Bach Choir.

Baritone **Ralph Cato** (Pilate) has performed around the world, singing masterworks of opera, oratorio, and the musical stage to critical acclaim. His repertoire spans a broad range of lyric and dramatic operatic baritone roles, which include Amonasro in *Aida*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Tonio in *I Pagliacci*, and Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*. In his repertoire of oratorio performances, one finds Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, as well as works by Bach, Bruckner, Fauré, Handel, Mozart, Vaughan Williams and others. Mr. Cato has performed with the Philharmonic in Cologne, Germany (Kölner Philharmonie), and the Estonia National Symphony. In the U.S., he has appeared with the Chicago Sinfonietta, the Pacific Symphony and Pacific Chorale, the Long Beach Symphony, the Stockton Symphony, the San Bernardino Symphony, the Los Angeles Pops Orchestra, the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, the Angeles Chorale and the United States Marine Band. He was the featured soloist in the very popular Irish dance show *Riverdance*, performing in venues throughout Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States

This concert has been underwritten, in part, by Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons.
Additional concert support provided by Karl and Marilyn Forsstrom and Albert and Dorcas Lawn.

Ticket prices start at \$20. Student/senior discounts available by phone only.

For more information, or for tickets, visit www.pacificchorale.org or call Pacific Chorale at (714) 662-2345.

ABOUT JOHN ALEXANDER

Artistic Director of Pacific Chorale since 1972, John Alexander has received consistent acclaim for his inspired leadership, both on the podium and as an advocate for the advancement of the arts. In his long and distinguished career, he has conducted hundreds of performances of choirs and orchestras in 27 countries around the globe. Noted as a specialist in conducting the choral/orchestral masterworks, he is also a strong proponent of American music, programming groundbreaking works by California composers and bringing twelve West Coast and world premieres to Southern California performance halls in the past thirteen years. Choruses prepared by John Alexander have performed under many of the most renowned conductors on the world stage, including Zubin Mehta, Pierre Boulez, Seiji Ozawa, Michael Tilson Thomas, Leonard Slatkin, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Gustavo Dudamel, Lukas Foss, Max Rudolf, Carl St.Clair, Gerard Schwarz, Marin Alsop, John Mauceri, John Williams, and Keith Lockhart. In June 2008, Alexander was honored with the “Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art” from Chorus America.

ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE AND THE JOHN ALEXANDER SINGERS

Founded in 1968, Pacific Chorale is internationally recognized for exceptional artistic expression, stimulating American-focused programming, and influential education programs. Pacific Chorale presents a significant performance season of its own at the Orange County Performing Arts Center and is sought regularly to perform with the nation’s leading symphonies. Under the inspired guidance of Artistic Director John Alexander, Pacific Chorale has infused an Old World art form with California’s hallmark innovation and cultural independence. In addition to its long-standing partnership with Pacific Symphony, the Chorale has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Disney Hall on numerous occasions. Other noted collaborations include the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, the National Symphony, and the Long Beach, Pasadena, Riverside and San Diego symphonies. John Alexander and the Chorale have toured extensively in Europe, South America and Asia.

The John Alexander Singers, Pacific Chorale’s professional chamber choir, is an independently contracted vocal ensemble of 24 singers. While most of these singers also serve as part of the professional core to Pacific Chorale’s 140-voice symphonic ensemble, their work with the John Alexander Singers focuses on specialized repertoire appropriate for a chamber chorus. Pacific Chorale regularly presents the John Alexander Singers in concert venues throughout Southern California. The Singers have collaborated extensively with Musica Angelica, Southern California’s premier period instrument orchestra. Other notable collaborations include performances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s new music “Green Umbrella” series, and performances with the Kronos Quartet, Mark Morris Dance Company, The Royal Ballet of Covent Garden, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Pacific Symphony.

ABOUT MUSICA ANGELICA

Regarded as Southern California's premier Baroque ensemble, Musica Angelica presents wide-ranging programs encompassing music from the early Baroque through the early Classical era. Since its inception in 1993, Musica Angelica has produced an annual subscription season of orchestral and chamber concerts in venues throughout Los Angeles County, programming a mixture of known masterworks along with rarely heard gems, and featuring many of the best Baroque musicians from across the country and Europe. Guest conductors have included Rinaldo Alessandrini, Giovanni Antonini, Harry Bicket, Paul Goodwin, and Jory Vinikour, among others. Based in Santa Monica, Musica Angelica, collaborates with leading performing arts institutions in Southern California including Los Angeles Opera, Long Beach Opera, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Norton Simon Museum, and the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Musica Angelica was co-founded by Michael Eagan, widely considered one of the foremost lute players in the country, and gambist Mark Chatfield. Eagan passed away in 2004, and Chatfield passed away in 1998.