

PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

SATURDAY, JULY 15 | 8 PM | THE BREAKERS

This concert is made possible through the generous support of **Ken Scigulinsky** in memory of **Tia Scigulinsky** — classical music was her special joy.

Christine Brandes, Conductor

VIOLIN

Isabelle Seula Lee
Shelby Yamin
Jolianne von Einem
Katherine Kyme
Anthony Martin
Lisa Grodin
Maxine Nemerovski
Noah Strick

VIOLA

Aaron Westman
Ellie Nishi
Maria Caswell

CELLO

William Skeen
Phoebe Carrai

BASS

Kristin Zoernig

OBOE

Priscilla Herreid
Margaret Owens

BASSOON

Andrew Schwartz

HARPSICORD

Hanneke van Proosdij

THEORBO

Kevin Payne

STAFF

Jeff Phillips, *Director of Artistic Planning*
Isaac Bunch, *Director of Artistic Operations*
Megan Twain, *Production Coordinator*

HANDEL **Sinfonia from *Saul***
(Approximate duration 10 minutes)

BIBER **Mensa Sonora Pars III in A minor**
(Approximate duration 9 minutes)

HANDEL **Concerto Grosso in F Major, Op. 3, No. 4**
(Approximate duration 12 minutes)

INTERMISSION

HANDEL **Concerto Grosso in D minor, Op. 3, No. 5**
(Approximate duration 10 minutes)

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| MASON BATES | <i>Appalachian Ayre</i> [East Coast Premiere] (Approximate duration 10 minutes) |
| HANDEL | Concerto Grosso in B-flat Major, Op. 3, No. 2 (Approximate duration 11 minutes) |
| HANDEL | "Arrival of the Queen of Sheba" from Solomon (Approximate duration 4 minutes) |

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759): *Sinfonia from Saul*

With his oratorio *Saul*, Handel raised the Old Testament oratorio to its highest point, producing one of the supreme masterpieces of dramatic art. *Saul* was first performed in 1739 in King's Theatre in London. At this time, the oratorio, a new genre, had replaced opera in England, but in his composing of oratorios, Handel was able to preserve the sense of drama and the insight into characters he had demonstrated in his operas.

Handel and his librettist Charles Jennens skillfully condensed the Biblical story of Saul, David, and Jonathan for this oratorio, which took up 26 chapters of the Old Testament. Handel conceived *Saul* on the grandest scale and included one of the largest orchestras possible for the time period, with the most varied instrumentation he had ever assembled in London. This copious palette provided Handel with the tools for creating instrumental color with striking effects. In addition to the standard orchestra of the time, Handel added three trombones giving the work an unusual heavy brass component. Letters from Handel's friends implied that his use of the trombones reflected his desire to emulate ancient Hebrew music, with trombones standing in for the Hebrew ram's horn, or shofar. He also used a harp, large deep-sounding kettledrums, an organ, and a carillon. All of these instruments contributed to the wealth of rare instrumental color that Handel was able to showcase in the work.

The introductory *Sinfonia* performs the function of a musical stage set for the exceptional music of the oratorio. The *Sinfonia*, synonymous with what was often called the Overture, was commonly found at the oratorio's beginning. Handel wrote this one in characteristically imitative Italian overture style. The *Sinfonia* is sometimes called a symphony, which accounts for why it is broken into movement like groupings, with alternation in tempi: fast, slow, fast, slow. (There are pauses for tempo changes.)

The first movement, *Allegro*, has some very bright sections with a true Baroque *Allegro* sound. The second movement, *Larghetto*, contrasts with its slow tempo and more attention to winds. The third movement, *Allegro*, takes the form of a concerto movement, originally written to highlight the organ; then the last movement, *Andante larghetto*, is a slow movement. It has been said that Handel composed this initial music of the oratorio, overall, like a double violin concerto with the violin solos replaced by flamboyant organ solos.

Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber (1644-1704): *Mensa Sonora Pars III in A minor, C/ 71*

Biber, who was the Kappellmeister to the Archbishop of Salzburg, was one of the most important predecessors of J.S. Bach. Biber was acknowledged in his time to be the only German virtuoso violinist comparable to the brilliant players of France and Italy. The originality of his violin music can be credited with keeping his name alive through the centuries although he did write several operas and many works of other kinds.

In 1670, Biber entered the service of Prince-Archbishop Maximilian Gandolph von Khüenburg to whom he dedicated both his famous *Mystery Sonatas* of 1676 and the collection of six suites, *Mensa sonora*, (Latin for "Tafelmusik" or "Table-Music") meaning "sounding table." The archbishop called this suite, published in 1680, "a noble jewel of harmony." It was intended to be played during dinner, which explains why it is not as technically demanding as much of his other music; therefore, for example, the use of the *scordatura* technique, so prominent in much of Biber's violin music, is not used here. In his dedication to *Mensa Sonora*, Biber pointed out: "The Sonorous Table, or Instrumental Table Music with the lively sound of the violin [is] by no means painstakingly to spread upon your princely table a rare banquet, like those of the glutton Apicius, nor to serve you with a pearl beyond price, like the spendthrift Cleopatra, but to tender in all dutifulness the noble jewel of homophony, concordant with obedient and humble veneration."

The six suites were mainly made up of very short dance movements, which were understood as the least substantial of Biber's instrumental works. Today, however, because of Biber demonstrated much imagination in writing them and a high level of skill especially in his use of counterpoint, they have transcended their categorization as functional music but because *Mensa sonora* is less virtuosic than most of Biber's other music, these pieces have rarely been performed in concerts. The main content of all of the suites of the *Mensa Sonora* is their succession of movements in dance rhythms, though these are stylized and not meant for actual dancing.

This suite is the only one of the six that does not begin with a sonata or intrada movement. In the first movement, *Galliarda, Allegro*, the music is brilliant, displays considerable depth, and is more technically demanding than the other movements. Its strong accents mark moments when imitation in the inner voices answers the top line. The arpeggio motif at the beginning is very original. The main feature that defines a galliard step is a large jump, after which the dancer lands with one leg ahead of the other. This dance was the favorite of Queen Elizabeth I. The second movement, *Sarabanda*, has a sad theme and harmonies that are particularly affecting especially as they contrast with the formal, stately tempo. Sarabandes originally were slow, stately Spanish dances, in triple meter.

Aria, the middle movement, is spirited and very brief with imitative counterpoint. The fourth movement, *Ciacona*, is the longest individual movement in the collection of all six suites. The *ciacona* is a set of variations on a repeated short harmonic progression involving a short repetitive bass line (ground bass), on a harmonic pattern and bass line that continues on, while the chords keep repeating. In this movement, the variations consist of elaborations on the main theme. Musicologists have theorized that the presence of a long *ciacona* at nearly the end of the suite probably indicates that Biber expected the musicians would take a break after its conclusion, especially since it has a decisive ending. The last movement, *Sonatina*, is a short, lively fast piece. Its function was to let the audience know that the partita was finished.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759): Concerto Grosso in F Major, Op. 3, No. 4, in F Major HWV 315

Handel was essentially a composer of vocal music, especially of operas and oratorios with which he made a fortune during the period of about a half-century when he lived in London. Producing big oratorios was a complex business, so many of the concertos were hastily put together at the last moment, often using such preexisting material as keyboard pieces, opera overtures, and sacred choruses. In 1734, when a London music publisher first issued a set of six of the concertos as Handel's Op. 3, his edition showed the too obvious marks of this haste as well as

the fact that he most probably did not have an active hand in it. A revised and corrected version appeared a year later.

Without Handel's initial knowledge, John Walsh published the concertos in 1734. Walsh, seeking to take advantage of the commercial success of Corelli's *Concerti Grossi*, combined several of Handel's already existing works and grouped them into six concertos. Walsh probably acted on his own without any supervision or even any cooperation from Handel. During his time in Italy 1707-1710, Handel had learned from Corelli's compositional style and had incorporated the elements he found there in his instrumental music: clear construction, juxtaposition of homophony and polyphony, contrast of movements, and the use of dance forms. Handel was luckily able to have a share of the profits from Walsh's endeavor; this income was especially meaningful since Handel's operatic ventures were floundering financially.

Handel made some revisions of the set, probably later in 1734 and again in 1741. Music historian John Hawkins believes that Handel composed these concertos for the 1733 marriage festivities of the Princess Royal (a student of Handel) and the Prince of Orange. Stanley Sadie, who wrote a book on Handel's concertos, felt that it was possible the works had even been specially assembled for the occasion of the wedding, making Walsh's publication a kind of musical souvenir of the event.

The Op. 3 grouping quickly acquired the name "Oboe Concertos," because of the unusual prominence of the oboes in most of them. Op. 3, No. 4 was scored for two oboes, one bassoon, strings, and continuo and has four movements.

The first is an overture in the French (Lully) baroque style, with a slow, stately introduction, *Largo*, an *Allegro* fugue, and a slow closing. The first and second oboes play along with the first and second violins. Handel may have composed this movement as early as 1716, when it was used as an overture or entr'acte in his Italian opera *Amadigi di Gaula*. A graceful minuet with one solo oboe, *Andante*, a fugal *Allegro* with solo passages, and then a final Minuet, *Allegro* follow.

For the reprinted edition, Handel evidently asked Walsh to replace *Concerto Grosso No. 4*, which he had not written, with one he had. The one you hear in this concert is the one Handel composed.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759): Concerto Grosso in D minor, Op. 3, No. 5, HWV 316

Concerto in D minor, Op. 3, No. 5, for two oboes, strings, and continuo, opens with two movements based on music from the *Chandos Anthems No. 2 and No. 6*, the dozen Psalm settings Handel wrote for the family chapel services of James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, while serving as director of music at the Duke's estate in Middlesex in 1717-18. Next is a serious *Largo*. The *Allegro* that follows, a fugue with two subjects, also makes up the introduction to "In the Lord Put I My Trust," HWV 247, the second of Handel's *Chandos Anthems*. Handel composed the third movement, *Adagio*, specifically for this concerto, and its harmony is most interesting. The elaborate fourth movement, *Allegro non troppo* can be traced to the overture to "As Pants the Hart for Cooling Streams," *Chandos Anthem No. 6*, HWV 251b. The lively finale, based on the returns of a unison refrain, was the second movement originally composed for this concerto.

This concerto is more operatic and consequently, more dramatic than its predecessors.

Mason Bates (b. 1977): *Appalachian Ayre* [East Coast Premiere]

Appalachian Ayre is a dreamy meditation on the fascinating connection between baroque performance practice and early bluegrass. Growing up in Virginia, I was often struck by the way bluegrass players held their bows in the middle, rather than at the end, where classical players hold their bows today. This idiosyncrasy I also noticed when I first encountered period instrument ensembles.

Indeed the early manner of holding the bow, brought over by the early colonists from the Old World, remained frozen in time as bluegrass fiddling spread through America. There are also some melodic ornaments that connect these seemingly disparate genres, and the plektrum sounds of the theorbo are a predecessor to the banjo. Enamored of both Americana and Baroque music, I created this lyrical homage to both. – Mason Bates

Bates was named the most-performed composer of his generation and the Composer of the Year 2018 by Musical America. In a 2004 interview for the *Los Angeles Times*, Mason Bates said, “Music, for me, is not a mental exercise, not an abstract construction. It’s intuitional. It needs to have the power to viscerally move people and to communicate strongly, across a broad reach.” Communicative crossing of boundaries has become standard for Bates, and this practice has given his music strength and dynamism.

Bates was the Kennedy Center’s first ever composer-in-residence and his symphonic music is the first to receive widespread acceptance for its unique integration of electronic sounds. As both a DJ and a curator, he is a visible advocate for bringing new music to new spaces, whether through institutional partnerships such as his former residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra or through his club/classical project called Mercury Soul, which transforms commercial clubs into exciting hybrid musical events. He has also composed for films, including Gus Van Sant’s *The Sea of Trees* starring Matthew McConaughey and Naomi Watts. Highly informed by his work as a DJ, Bates’ curatorial approach integrates adventurous music, ambient information, and social platforms in a fluid and immersive way.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759): Concerto Grosso in B flat Major, Op. 3 No. 2, HWV 313

Handel composed the five-movement *Concerto Grosso in B flat Major, Op. 3 No. 2, HWV 313* around 1715-18. During his time in Italy 1707-1710, Handel had been exposed to Corelli's compositional style, and he incorporated the elements he found there: clear construction, juxtaposition of homophony and polyphony, contrast of movements, and the use of dance forms.

Only occasionally in this work does Handel write in the traditional concerto grosso manner with a tutti group and a contrasting, smaller concertino group; Walsh’s title page was based on Corelli’s famous Op. 6 concertos and gave the false impression that the Handel works would be string orchestra concertos based on concerto grosso scoring. Instead, in Handel’s works there are virtuoso solo passages for both the strings and the woodwinds, which does somewhat echo the form of the concerto grosso even though traditional contrasting forces are not employed.

The first movement, *Vivace*, and the 3rd, *Allegro*, are closely related to Handel’s early work, *Brockes Passion*, HWV48, of 1716. The theme, used in both, is the vocal fugue “Declare his honour unto the Heathen.” Unusually, two dance movements, a minuet, and a gavotte, are included in the concerto.

In these Concerti, Handel calls for a standard orchestra for the late Baroque era: two oboes,

strings, and continuo, but the actual ensemble was larger than the original manuscript and the modern score suggest; occasionally, the number of bassoons equaled the number of the cellos. It was common practice also (in Dresden, Paris, and London) for at least two if not three oboists to play each part, and other instruments such as the recorder and the new transverse flute, and after 1750, the clarinet was also used.

The first movement, *Vivace*, features string playing, although in the subsequent movements, the oboe and bassoon are dominant. The second movement, *Largo*, in G minor, is the only movement not written in B-flat Major. The fourth movement, *Moderato*, resembles the opening movement of Handel's Op. 1, No. 11 flute sonata, and leads directly into the next movement, a gavotte, dominated by the oboe. The final gavotte, *Allegro*, resembles "The King Shall Rejoice" from Handel's *Coronation Anthems*. This movement is strongly reminiscent of one of Lully's dance movements.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759): *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba, from Solomon*

Handel's oratorio, *Solomon*, first performed in 1749 in Covent Garden in London, is a pageant in three acts. Its text is selected from the Old Testament and from the works of the ancient Roman-Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus. The first act is in two parts, celebrating the completion of the Temple and observing Solomon's devotion to his wife. The second is concerned with the famous judgment of Solomon, when two women claim to be the mother of a single child. In Act III, the Queen of Sheba, whose land is thought to have been in the part of the Arabian Peninsula now called Yemen, pays King Solomon a visit of state. As the Bible tells (I Kings 10,2), "She came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart." The whole was almost certainly intended to compare the reigning king, George II, by analogy, to the great Biblical monarch. English audiences of Handel's time were expected to be able to identify the parallels between the power and wisdom of Solomon and those of their king.

The *Sinfonia* (or overture) to this act has become popularly known as the *Entrance* (or sometimes, *Arrival*) of the *Queen of Sheba*. It is a short and bright concerto-like *Allegro*, originally set for two oboes and strings.

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra



Under the musical direction of Richard Egarr, **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale (PBO)** is recognized as "America's

leading historically informed ensemble" (The New York Times). Considered the most versatile ensemble of its kind, and performing on period instruments, PBO presents repertoire ranging from early Baroque to late Romantic, as well as new works and major operatic productions. The ensemble engages audiences through its signature Bay Area series, national and international tours, recordings, commissions, and education programs. Having celebrated its 40th anniversary last year, PBO was founded by Laurette

Goldberg and led by Music Director Laureate Nicholas McGegan for the past 35 years. Philharmonia is the largest ensemble of its kind in the United States

PBO's musicians are leaders in historical performance and serve on the faculties of The Juilliard School, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Harvard, and Stanford. It welcomes eminent guest artists including mezzo-sopranos Susan Graham and Anne Sofie von Otter, countertenors Anthony Roth Costanzo and Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, violoncellist Steven Isserlis, and maestros Jonathan Cohen and Jeannette Sorrell. PBO enjoys longstanding artistic collaborations with The Juilliard School, the Mark Morris Dance Group, and the American Modern Opera Company (AMOC), and appears regularly at Disney Hall, Lincoln Center, Norfolk Chamber Festival and Tanglewood. In collaboration with Cal Performances in 2017, PBO produced a fully staged period opera, Rameau's *Le Temple de la Gloire*, and produced a fully-staged, reimagined production of Handel's *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* directed by Christopher Alden and featuring countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, bass-baritone Davóne Tines, and soprano Lauren Snouffer in eight sold out performances in January 2020. "Aci" was named Best Operatic Performance in the Bay Area by *San Francisco Classical Voice* in 2020. PBO also co-produced "Aci" with National Sawdust in Brooklyn, Cath Brittan and Anthony Roth Costanzo in 2017.

Among the most recorded orchestras in the world, PBO boasts a discography of nearly 50 recordings, including a coveted archival performance of mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson in Berlioz's *Les Nuits D'été*, and a GRAMMY®-nominated recording of Haydn symphonies. The orchestra released the world premiere recording of the original version of Rameau's *Le Temple de la Gloire* with the unedited libretto by Voltaire in 2018. In 2020, PBO released three groundbreaking recordings: a full collection of commissioned works by Pulitzer Prize winner Caroline Shaw, a selection of arias

sung by rising star contralto Avery Amereau, and Handel's *Saul* with countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen.

Philharmonia was the first orchestra in the San Francisco Bay Area to commission Caroline Shaw. Shaw wrote three works for Anne Sofie von Otter and the Orchestra, as well as a major choral work. The first work premiered at LA's Disney Hall; the third at Lincoln Center.

The award-winning Philharmonia Chorale is critically acclaimed for its brilliant sound, robust energy, and sensitive delivery of the text. Formed in 1995, the Chorale provides a vocal complement whose fluency in the stylistic language of the baroque period matched that of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Founded by John Butt, a baroque keyboardist and one of the world's leading Bach scholars, the Chorale was led by Bruce Lamott from 1997 to 2020. Valérie Sainte-Agathe joins Philharmonia as its new Chorale Director in 2022.

Philharmonia is the only major orchestra in the United States with a permanent initiative dedicated to Jews & Music. The organization launched one of the most successful alternative concert series in the country, "SESSIONS", in 2015 with fully sold-out performances, and launched "In the Office" in 2019 in partnership with the advertising agency Goodby, Silverstein & Partners.

During the pandemic, the organization has presented more than 100 virtual programs, including the popular *Live from Amsterdam* with Music Director Richard Egarr, and "What's New and H.I.P." with Tarik O'Regan and Richard Egarr, focused on notions surrounding new music.

ARTIST CHANGE

We are fortunate to have **Christine Brandes** join us as guest conductor for tonight's performance.



Following a distinguished international singing career during which she was acclaimed for her radiant, crystalline voice and superb musicianship across a broad repertoire, Christine Brandes takes to the podium as conductor and garners praise for performances in the opera house and on the symphony stage.

A 2021-22 fellow of the Dallas Opera Hart Institute for Women Conductors, Christine Brandes has led productions of Gluck's *Orfeo et Eurydice* and Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* with West Edge Opera. With Victory Hall Opera in Charlottesville, Virginia, she has led productions of Haydn's *Armida*, Rameau's *La Sympathie*, and an innovative adaptation of Gluck's *Orfeo et Eurydice* interwoven with a new play collaborating with deaf actors. In June of 2023, she was one of three conductors leading the debut performance of the International Pride Orchestra in San Francisco, conducting the world premiere of *Loud* by Jimmy López Bellido.

Christine Brandes makes her conducting debut at Seattle Opera in autumn 2023 leading a production of Handel's *Alcina* directed by Tim Albery.

On the concert stage, Ms. Brandes made her debut with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra in autumn 2022 and her debut performances of Handel's *Messiah* with the Virginia Symphony in December of 2022. She also has served as cover conductor for Nicholas McGegan with the Oakland Symphony.

As a singer, she has performed principal roles for the following opera companies: San Francisco, Seattle, Washington National, Houston Grand, Minnesota, New York City Opera, Philadelphia, Glimmerglass, Portland, among others. She has sung with the following orchestras: Cleveland, Chicago, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, Atlanta, Detroit, Seattle, Minnesota, National Symphony, and with such distinguished conductors as Sir Simon Rattle, Pierre Boulez, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Nicholas McGegan, among many others.