



# WASHINGTON BACH CONSORT

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*The Nation's Premier Baroque Chorus and Orchestra*  
J. REILLY LEWIS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

**For Immediate Release**

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## WASHINGTON BACH CONSORT ANNOUNCES 2008 – 2009 SEASON

THE NATION'S PREMIER BAROQUE CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

SEASON FEATURES BACH, HANDEL AND COMPOSERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

RETURNS TO THE DELIGHTFUL NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Washington*—The Washington Bach Consort, the nation's premier Baroque chorus and orchestra, presents its 31<sup>st</sup> season and features works of J.S. Bach, George Frideric Handel, and a Christmas program incorporating seasonal works from composers from round the world. The subscription series of five concerts will return to the National Presbyterian Church for two performances and will also perform in two of the metropolitan area's most exciting concert venues: The Music Center at Strathmore and the new Harman Center for the Arts. Joining founding Music Director J. Reilly Lewis and the award-winning chorus and orchestra will be some of the world's most renowned vocal soloists.

The Washington Bach Consort will open its 2008-2009 season with *What's Opera Bach!* on November 9, 2008 at the Harman Center for the Arts and close with *In Praise of Music* on May 3, 2009 in the crystalline acoustics of The Music Center at Strathmore. The Consort will continue its partnership with the Harman Center for the Arts as its sole resident music ensemble, with *The Dresden Connection* on February 8, 2009.

The Consort will return to the National Presbyterian Church for both *An International Christmas* on December 21, 2008 and *The Great Organ Mass* on March 22, 2009. Referring to the performance of the "Great Organ Mass" at the National Presbyterian Church, Dr. Lewis says: "I couldn't ask for a more appropriate or noble setting to perform one of the few works that was published in Bach's lifetime." As always, the Washington Bach Consort performs on period instruments and in the authentic style of the Baroque era, so Consort audiences can enjoy this magnificent music just as Bach's audiences did.

### 2008-2009 Season Performances

#### ***What's Opera Bach!***

**Sunday, November 9, 2008, 3:00 p.m.**

**Harman Center for the Arts**

The 31<sup>st</sup> season opens at the Harman Center with “What’s Opera Bach!” – a performance of some of Bach’s most dramatic works including the Third Orchestral Suite; Cantata 80, *Ein fest Burg*; the powerful eight-part chorus, *Nun ist das Hei*, BWV 50; and a staged production of the *Dramma per musica*, BWV 207, *Vereinigte Zwietracht der wechselnden Saiten*– the closet Bach ever came to writing opera.

***An International Christmas***

**Sunday, December 21, 2008 3:00 p.m.**

**National Presbyterian Church**

An enthusiastic return to the National Presbyterian Church features the versatility of our singers in a program of Christmas music from around the world, including compositions by Whitacre (US), Taverner (UK), Villette (France), Villa-Lobos (Brazil), Chesnokov (Russia), Ødegaard (Norway), Lewis (Wales), and of course, Bach!

***The Dresden Connection***

**Sunday, February 8, 2009, 3:00 p.m.**

**Harman Center for the Arts**

“The Dresden Connection” marks the Consort’s second Harman Center presentation designed to showcase the virtuosity of our period instrument orchestra. The rich variety of Baroque chamber music includes works from J.S. Bach, C.P.E. Bach, Handel, Hasse, Telemann, Fasch, and Heinichen, all of whom wrote music for the court in Dresden.

***The Great Organ Mass***

**Sunday, March 22, 2009, 3:00 p.m.**

**National Presbyterian Church**

We celebrate Bach’s Birthday weekend with a performance of his “Great Organ Mass.” This performance features the keyboard talents of Consort founder and Music Director Dr. J. Reilly Lewis and Assistant Conductor Scott Dettra along with our chorus in the resplendent acoustics of the National Presbyterian Church. If you love the *Goldberg Variations*, the *Art of Fugue*, or the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, you will not want to miss this essential volume of the Bach keyboard canon.

***In Praise of Music***

**Sunday, May 3, 2009, 3:00 p.m.**

**Music Center at Strathmore**

The Consort’s 31<sup>st</sup> season concludes with a grand finale at the Music Center at Strathmore as we pay tribute to Bach’s contemporary, George Frideric Handel. This spectacular all-Handel program commemorates the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the composer’s death with a large-scale performance of five of his most beloved works, including the “Water Music”, the recently discovered “Gloria”, two of his festive “Coronation Anthems” and the majestic *Ode for St. Cecilia’s Day*.

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Outreach and Education Programs

Each subscription concert will be preceded by a lecture focusing on the work to be performed. The lectures are presented by world-recognized Bach scholar, Michael Marissen, Professor of Music at Swarthmore College. These lectures are approximately an hour in length, immediately preceding the concert.

The popular **Noontime Cantata Series** returns with six free-of-charge performances at the Church of the Epiphany, located at 13th & G Streets, NW, Washington, DC, just across the street from the Metro Center metro stop. The Consort will perform at noon on the first Tuesday of October, November, December, March, April, and May. The fifty-minute concerts include a brief introduction by Music Director J. Reilly Lewis and an organ prelude and fugue featuring area keyboard artists.

Presented by Consort musicians in costume, a newly reworked and rewritten **Bach in Time** is the Consort's interactive music education program focusing on fourth through sixth graders. It will be re-introduced in the fall.

### About the Washington Bach Consort

Founded in 1977 by J. Reilly Lewis, the Washington Bach Consort is a professional chorus and orchestra noted for its performance of 18<sup>th</sup>-Century music on period instruments. Its mission is to perform to the highest artistic standards the music of J.S. Bach and his Baroque contemporaries.

As one of the nation's critically acclaimed and widely recognized performing arts institutions, it has appeared at numerous festivals and has made three European tours. Recordings include Bach's complete motets, both J.S. and C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificats*, the first American recording of the *F Major* and *G Minor Masses*, and a soon-to-be-released recording of the solo soprano cantatas featuring opera superstar Elizabeth Futral.

The Consort recently completed Bach's entire 215-cantata cycle. In association with this monumental achievement, the Library of Congress has welcomed the Washington Bach Consort performance recording and concert program archives into its permanent collection.

Washington Bach Consort founder and music director J. Reilly Lewis is recognized internationally as an accomplished conductor and keyboard artist, as well as a leading specialist of Baroque music, particularly the music of J.S. Bach. A native of Washington, DC, Dr. Lewis performs regularly both as a conductor and keyboard artist in his home city, as well as for national and international audiences.

He has been the featured organ soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra, presented numerous solo organ recitals, and has performed the complete Bach *Goldberg Variations* in recital on multiple occasions both in the United States and abroad.

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His festival appearances include the Handel Festival in Halle, an all American music festival in Taipei, the Cologne New Music Festival, the Aspen Music Festival and the Mostly Mozart Festival. Recent conducting appearances include the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (Bach's *B Minor Mass*), the National Symphony Orchestra (Handel's *Messiah*), and Washington's Cathedral Choral Society, where he serves as Music Director.

Among Maestro Lewis' many honors are *Washingtonian* Magazine's Music Hall of Fame, the University Club of Washington's Distinguished Washingtonian Award for the Arts, Special Recognition Mayor's Arts Award for contributions to the arts and cultural community of Washington, and *Washingtonian* Magazine's 2005 Washingtonian of the Year.

#### Subscriptions and Single Tickets

Subscriptions to the Washington Bach Consort's 2008-2009 are currently available. Single tickets to Bach Consort performances will go on sale in September. For more information, contact the Consort at 202.429.2121. Information is available on the Consort website at [www.bachconsort.org](http://www.bachconsort.org).

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