

WELCOME FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



ANTOINE PLANTE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

LYNN WYATT CHAIR

Dear Friends,

Many, myself included, consider this *Passion* the most important composition by Bach. It is not every day that we have the opportunity to perform, or hear a live performance of such an exceptional masterwork. This piece is the classical music equivalent of a *Mona Lisa* or a *David*. Unlike those pieces however, great works of music require musicians to take the notes off of the page and bring them to life. Working with such an important piece can be daunting for a conductor. But, once I really dug into the score, I realized that the music was far too generous and too loving to warrant such worries.

This piece takes you away and transports you to a secure place that is sometimes challenging but mostly full of love. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* requires a large group of performers. Two choirs, two orchestras and many soloists, all present to tell the story of Christ's last moments. The story is told mainly by two characters - the Evangelist and Jesus, at times with interventions of the choruses and soloists taking turns as groups of disciples, mad crowds or a faithful community of believers.

The story is punctuated by many meditations and reflections on the meaning of what is happening. These reflections are often sung by soloists, sometimes alone and sometimes accompanied by a choir. Other times the entire ensemble gets involved. The result of this complicated structure is absolutely moving.

I am so glad to collaborate again with the Houston Symphony Chorus Chamber Ensemble, Houston Boychoir Chamber Choir along with a fantastic group of soloists and the wonderful musicians of Mercury.

I hope you will enjoy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Antoine Plante". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Antoine" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Plante".