

News Release

MERCURY CELEBRATES THE POWER OF MUSIC DURING COVID-19

MERCURY BROADCASTS PREVIOUS PERFORMANCES

MERCURY MUSICIANS PERFORM INDIVIDUAL SONGS OF COMFORT

(Houston, TX) March 27, 2020: Beginning this week, **Mercury Chamber Orchestra** is streaming previously recorded period-instrument concerts and posting original content for the enjoyment of the Houston community and beyond. In this time of crisis, Mercury wants to celebrate its musicians as well as the power that music has to bring the community together, even as we have to be apart.

In lieu of their March 28 concert, Haydn's Cello Concerto which was cancelled due to COVID-19, Mercury kicks off their online broadcast series by streaming one of their most popular performances, **Beethoven's Ninth Symphony**, from the grand finale of their 15th Anniversary Season on May 14, 2016. This will be offered free of charge on their Facebook and website at <http://www.mercuryhouston.org/listen-at-home>, and features a live introduction by Maestro Antoine Plante.

Beethoven's Ninth features Mercury musicians on period instruments, bringing the community a fresh experience of this profound and beloved work of Beethoven's that celebrates the brotherhood of humankind. The performance includes soloists Mary Wilson, Sarah Mesko, Zachary Wilder, and Tyler Duncan as well as the Houston Symphony Chorus Chamber Ensemble under the direction of Betsy Cook Weber.

Future streaming concerts planned include period-instrument performances of Bach's St. Matthew Passion on Good Friday, April 10, and Handel's Messiah on Easter, April 12.

In addition to this online broadcast series, Mercury is featuring its core musicians through a selection of online videos, **Mercury Songs of Comfort**. Inspired by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, this series posted to social media, features musician-created content of their songs of comfort and things they are doing to get by as they stay-at-home to stay safe. Mercury Songs of Comfort are available on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/mercuryhouston) and at www.mercuryhouston.org/songs-of-comfort.

For Immediate Release

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ABOUT MERCURY

Innovation, accessibility and dynamism are just three of the distinguishing characteristics of Mercury, the critically acclaimed Houston-based period instrument ensemble that continues to redefine the orchestra experience. Now in its 19th season, Mercury celebrates the power of music – from the Baroque period and more - serving the Houston community and beyond through teaching, sharing and performing with passion, intimacy and excellence.

Founded by conductor and Artistic Director Antoine Plante and three friends in 2000 with the goal to enrich and entertain Houston audiences with an exciting repertoire of Baroque music performed on period instruments, the ensemble gradually expanded its vision to offer fresh, original performances of a broader repertoire, and integrated multi-media, unique dance, costume and narrative elements into its programs.

In addition to performances in multiple venues throughout the Houston area, including its flagship series at Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, Mercury continues to invest in the community. It offers free community performances annually, including the community concert at The Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park, and the public concerts in the Crain Garden at Houston Methodist Hospital. Recognized for its award-winning education outreach programs comprising classroom music education and performances in Houston area schools, Mercury also presents master classes for school orchestras. Active in the recording scene, to date, Mercury has released eight albums on its own label, featuring works by Corelli, Mozart, Schubert, Rameau, Vivaldi, Piazzolla, and Handel.

Mercury continues its collaboration with The Juilliard School's Historical Performance Program for the fourth year. The Mercury-Juilliard Fellowship initiative encourages the development of talented young instrumentalists and fosters a strong relationship between two major players in America's period instrument performance scene, as well as introducing Houston audiences to the next generation of great period performance musicians.

Mercury gratefully acknowledges the following organizations and corporations for their ongoing support: The City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance, Houston Endowment Inc., Texas Commission on the Arts, the Wyatt Foundation, the Mid-America Arts Alliance, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Additional information on Mercury, its events and concerts, directions to the venues, and to learn more about its recordings, please visit www.mercuryhouston.org

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