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American Bach Soloists Release Remastered Premiere Recording of Corelli Concerti Grossi Transcriptions

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Arcangelo Corelli's famous "Christmas Concerto" — given the designation "*Fatto per la notte di Natale*" — is a holiday favorite due to its final movement, a bucolic "Pastorale" that seems to create sonorities of idyllic tranquility.

This album is the premiere recording of Corelli's masterful instrumental works that features the transcriptions by Corelli's London publisher, John Walsh, in which the duo violin solos are given to recorders. Two recorder virtuosos, Dan Laurin and Hanneke van Proosdij, deliver the intricate and delicate solos along with 'cellist Tanya Tomkins and harpsichordist Michael Sponseller. Also included are three concerti that feature Australian violinist Elizabeth Wallfisch and Bay Area violinist Katherine Kyme.

A "must have" for collectors of great works from the Baroque, this remastered recording — available on CD, through streaming services like Spotify, and on iTunes and Apple Music — offers superb sound quality engineered to the higher audio resolution standards of the "Apple Digital Masters" series.



More about the Transcriptions:

It was standard practice in the early eighteenth century for publishers to offer arrangements of popular works, to be played "at home" or by instruments more commonly played by talented amateurs. Keyboard transcriptions of great works are prominent in this genre, as are works re-scored for performances by recorders. In 1725, the London publisher J. Walsh printed an edition of the Corelli opus 6 concertos, which employed recorders of several sizes and pitches to play the solo violin parts in Corelli's original orchestration. The recorder was a very popular instrument (as it is to this day), and without a doubt these transcriptions were extremely well received. The question of authenticity as reflected by Corelli's knowledge of the transcriptions, however, has recently been more satisfactorily answered. While the assumption has been made that Walsh was merely cashing in on some popular music, a letter has been found which clearly indicates the business relationship between Corelli and Walsh: Corelli was indeed collecting royalties from Walsh, so any arrangements by the publisher must have been known to the composer, and in fact authorized.

INFORMATION: americanbach.org/recordings/Corelli

About American Bach Soloists

AMERICAN BACH SOLOISTS ("ABS") was founded in 1989 with the mission of introducing contemporary audiences to the cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach through historically informed performances. Under the leadership of co-founder and Music Director Jeffrey Thomas, the ensemble has achieved its vision of assembling the world's finest vocalists and period-instrument performers to bring this brilliant music to life.

For three decades, Jeffrey Thomas has brought thoughtful, meaningful, and informed perspectives to his performances as Artistic and Music Director of the American Bach Soloists. Recognized worldwide as one of the foremost interpreters of the music of Bach and the Baroque, he continues to inspire audiences and performers alike through his keen insights into the passions behind musical expression. *Fanfare Magazine* proclaimed that "Thomas' direction seems just right, capturing the humanity of the music ... there is no higher praise for Bach performance." Critical acclaim has been extensive: *The Washington Post* named ABS "the best American specialists in early music ... a flawless ensemble ... a level of musical finesse one rarely encounters." *San Francisco Classical Voice* declared "there is nothing routine or settled about their work. Jeffrey Thomas is still pushing the musical Baroque envelope." And the *San Francisco Chronicle* has extolled the ensemble's "divinely inspired singing."

In 2013, to commemorate ABS Music Director Jeffrey Thomas's 25-year tenure of inspired leadership, the American Bach Soloists created the Jeffrey Thomas Award to honor, recognize, and encourage exceptionally gifted emerging professionals in the field of Early Music.

Bringing to fruition the ensemble's commitment to introduce audiences to newly discovered works from the Baroque era, ABS presented the West Coast premiere of Antonio Lotti's *Mass for Three Choirs* in 2011 and the first North American performance of Heinrich Biber's 53-part *Missa Salisburgensis* — perhaps the largest-scaled surviving work from the Baroque — utilizing the composer's full instrumentation at the 2013 ABS Festival & Academy. In 2015, the Festival offered the first performances outside of Europe of Marin Marais' 1709 opera, *Sémélé*. Handel's complete serenata, *Parnasso in festa*, was given its North and South American premiere at the 2016 Festival & Academy.

American Bach Soloists are frequent winners of *San Francisco Classical Voice* "Best of the Bay" awards, placing first in "Best Early Music / Baroque Ensemble," "Best Choral Performers," "Best Early Music / Baroque Performance," "Best Vocal Recital," and four times as "Best Festival".

The American Bach Soloists' renowned discography — available on CD and streaming services — includes their recent audio recordings of the American Bach Choir in a disc of Bach's Motets for Double Chorus, the ABS orchestra in Bach's Orchestral Suites, and the most recent release of "Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen Sings Gluck, Handel, & Vivaldi." ABS's beautiful feature film "Handel's *Messiah* in Grace Cathedral," recorded in 5.1 DTS-HD™ Surround Sound and 2.0 DTS-HD™ Stereo, is available on High Definition Blu-ray™ and DVD, as well as streaming video services.

More information at: americanbach.org/about

About Music Director Jeffrey Thomas

Jeffrey Thomas (conductor) has brought thoughtful, meaningful, and informed perspectives to his performances as Artistic and Music Director of American Bach Soloists for more than 25 years. Recognized worldwide as one of the foremost interpreters of the music of Bach and the Baroque, he continues to inspire audiences and performers alike through his keen insights into the passions behind musical expression. He has directed and conducted recordings of more than 20 Bach cantatas, the Mass in B Minor, *Brandenburg Concertos*, *Saint Matthew Passion*, Orchestral Suites, various concertos, motets for double chorus, and works by Beethoven, Handel, Haydn, Pergolesi, Schütz, and Vivaldi. *Fanfare Magazine* has praised his series of Bach recordings, stating that "Thomas' direction seems just right, capturing the humanity of the music ... there is no higher praise for Bach performance."

Educated at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Manhattan School of Music, and the Juilliard School of Music, with further studies in English literature at Cambridge University, he has taught at the Amherst Early Music Workshop, Oberlin College Conservatory Baroque Performance Institute, San Francisco Early Music Society, and Southern Utah Early Music Workshops; presented master classes at the Eastman School of Music, the New England Conservatory of Music, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, SUNY at Buffalo, Swarthmore College, and Washington University; and served on the faculties of Lehigh University in Pennsylvania and the University of California, where he was artist-in-residence and is now professor emeritus of music (Barbara K. Jackson Chair in Choral Conducting) in the Department of Music at UC Davis, having been named a UC Davis Chancellor's Fellow from 2001 to 2006. The Rockefeller Foundation awarded him a prestigious Residency at the Bellagio Study and Conference Center at Villa Serbelloni. In 2019, he was a guest

conductor at the Historical Performance Institute of Indiana University in Bloomington. Additionally, Mr. Thomas hosts two public radio programs on Classical KDFC.

Before devoting all of his time to conducting, he was one of the first recipients of the San Francisco Opera Company's prestigious Adler Fellowships. Cited by *The Wall Street Journal* as "a superstar among oratorio tenors," Mr. Thomas' extensive discography of vocal music includes dozens of recordings of major works for Decca, EMI, Erato, Koch International Classics, Denon, Harmonia Mundi, Smithsonian, Newport Classics, and Arabesque. Mr. Thomas has appeared with the Baltimore, Berkeley, Boston, Detroit, Houston, National, Rochester, Minnesota, and San Francisco symphony orchestras; with the Vienna Symphony and the New Japan Philharmonic; with many American Baroque orchestras; and in Austria, England, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Mexico. He has performed at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Spoleto USA Festival, Ravinia Festival, Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Berkeley Festival and Exhibition, Boston Early Music Festival, Bethlehem Bach Festival, Göttingen Festival, Tage Alte Musik Festival in Regensburg, E. Nakamichi Baroque Festival in Los Angeles, the Smithsonian Institution, and at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's "Next Wave Festival," and he has collaborated on several occasions as conductor with the Mark Morris Dance Group.

More information at: americanbach.org/JeffreyThomas.html

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