

**BOSTON BAROQUE PRESENTS PREMIER RECORDING OF
MOZART: ARIAS FOR MALE SOPRANO
FEATURING MICHAEL MANIACI
IN HIS DEBUT RECORDING WITH ORCHESTRA**

MUSIC DIRECTOR MARTIN PEARLMAN CONDUCTS

**Boston Baroque's 20th Telarc release gives modern audiences
their first opportunity to hear music Mozart wrote for the castrato
voice
sung by the closest modern equivalent: a natural male soprano**

Cleveland, OH – Telarc International and Concord Music Group are proud to announce an all-Mozart release by three-time Grammy[®] nominee Boston Baroque, conducted by founding music director Martin Pearlman. For the project, which marks their 20th release on Telarc, the ensemble has united with the fascinating American vocal artist Michael Maniaci, a true male soprano, in their first recording together and his first solo recording with orchestra. This recording of “firsts” is also the premier recording of Mozart’s arias for the castrato voice that gives audiences the opportunity to hear it as Mozart heard it: sung by an artist not only with soprano range, haunting vocal color, and brilliant coloratura, but also with male vocal power.

The disc contains arias from *Idomeneo*, *Lucio Silla*, and *La Clemenza di Tito*, as well as the beloved motet *Exsultate, jubilate*. The recording is rounded out with two brilliant orchestral numbers, the overtures to *Idomeneo* and *Clemenza*.

The first permanent Baroque orchestra established in North America, Boston Baroque is widely regarded as “one of the world’s premier period-instrument bands” (Fanfare). The ensemble's performances and recordings of the Baroque and Classical repertoire have been hailed by audiences and critics in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia for their freshness, virtuosity, and exuberant appeal. Although Maniaci’s voice is natural, his stunning performances give Boston Baroque the opportunity to add yet another “original” instrument – the male soprano voice – to their critically-acclaimed performing forces.

Michael Maniaci has been lauded for “his natural male soprano that is probably the closest thing on earth to the sound of the castrati of long ago; and he uses it with a finesse that’s rare among singers so young” (Toronto Globe and Mail).

A voice type that was enormously popular in opera and religious music in the 17th century

but completely disappeared over a century ago, the male castrato's true chest voice – unlike falsetto singers – was in the soprano or alto range, yet extremely powerful due to the male lung capacity. Up until now, all we have really known of this voice are the verbal descriptions of contemporary listeners and a single, scratchy recording made late in the life of the last castrato performer.

Maniaci's voice gives us our first glimpse of the power and unique timbre of this voice in his hauntingly beautiful performances, and his extraordinarily agile coloratura and ornamentation. His vocal prowess is never more evident on this recording than in Mozart's popular and virtuosic "Exsultate, jubilate," a solo motet originally written for the castrato Venanzio Rauzzini in 1773 that most music lovers today have heard many times—but always as sung by a female. It is a fascinating treat to hear it sung by a male soprano.

Other highlights from the release include "Il tenero momento" and "Ah se a morir" from *Lucia Silla*; "Il padre adorato" from *Idomeneo*; and "Deh per questo istante" and "Parto, parto" from *La Clemenza di Tito*. "Parto" is famous for its beautiful and virtuosic clarinet solo, interwoven with the vocal line, played on a period instrument on this recording by Boston Baroque's principal clarinet Nina Stern.

Boston Baroque's previous recordings and broadcasts of Mozart have included such career milestones as the American period-instrument premiere of *Don Giovanni*, which was broadcast nationally on public radio, and the first period-instrument recording of Robert Levin's completion of the Mozart *Requiem* (Telarc, 1995), which *CD Review* named as one of the three most important classical CDs of that year. Boston Baroque collaborated with Jacques Zoon on a recording of the two Mozart flute concertos (in Zoon's first recording on period flute); that recording also includes a stunning account of the "Jupiter" Symphony. Michael Maniaci and Boston Baroque have enjoyed several collaborations in live performances including a program of arias, and semi-staged performances of Handel's *Agrippina* (with Maniaci as Nerone) and *Xerxes* (Maniaci in the title role).

Founded in 1973 by Martin Pearlman, Boston Baroque presents an annual subscription concert series in Greater Boston and reaches an international audience with its critically acclaimed recording series on Telarc, of which *Fanfare* magazine wrote "each one is an incomparable gem." Under the direction of Pearlman, three Boston Baroque recordings have been Grammy[®] finalists: Handel's *Messiah* (1992); Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* (1998); and Bach's *Mass in B Minor* (2000). Boston Baroque is the resident professional ensemble for Boston University's Historical Performance Program. Martin Pearlman, a harpsichordist, conductor, composer and early music specialist, is among America's leading interpreters of Baroque and Classical music on both period and modern instruments.

Michael Maniaci has been praised for his rare, thrilling voice and sensational stage

presence. He made an acclaimed Metropolitan Opera debut in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, in which he "sang with clarity, passion, and hefty sound as Nireno" (*Opera News*). He made a last-minute debut to critical acclaim at Teatro la Fenice in Venice, and he has sung Handel, Mozart, Meyerbeer, Gluck and Monteverdi at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Royal Danish Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Opera North (UK) and Opera Atelier, among others. He trained at the Juilliard School and Cincinnati Conservatory of Music while gaining experience with several important young artist programs such as Glimmerglass Opera's Young American Artist Program, Wolf Trap Opera, Aspen Opera Theater, and Tanglewood Music Festival – as the first countertenor or male soprano ever invited to train there. He is a winner of the 2002 Richard Tucker Study Grant and took First Place honors in the 1999 Houston Grand Opera Competition.

Boston Baroque's *Mozart: Arias for Male Soprano* (TEL-31827-02) will be available at retail on January 26 2010.

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