

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 4, 2011

CONTACT:

Jenine Baines

818.416.7066

jeninebaines@gmail.com

**MUSICA ANGELICA BRINGS RARELY PERFORMED
MOZART OPERA TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**THREE PERFORMANCES OF MASTERWORK *ZAIDE*,
IN PASADENA AND SANTA MONICA, FEBRUARY 19 & 20**

Mozart never completed the lively opera Zaide but now, 230 years on, internationally renowned Music Director of the Santa Monica-based Baroque ensemble Musica Angelica (and fellow Austrian) Martin Haselböck “evens” the score, ingeniously interweaving the singspiel with other, complimentary works by Mozart.

Featured artists include soprano Janai Brugger-Ormanand, tenor Jesús León, both graduates of LA Opera’s Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program, as well as tenor Andrew Bidlack and bass-baritone Christian Hilz.

February 19, 8 p.m., First United Methodist Church, Pasadena

February 20, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., The Broad Stage, Santa Monica

SANTA MONICA, Calif. A musical tale of love, passion, jealousy, and courage is coming to Pasadena and Santa Monica with three exclusive performances of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s opera *Zaide* [zye-ee-də] February 19 and 20. This rarely performed gem of a *singspiel* (opera including spoken language) is being given the full treatment by Musica Angelica, Southern California’s foremost original-instrument authentic-performance Baroque ensemble under the baton of its internationally renowned music director Martin Haselböck [hah-zəl-berk]. For tickets and information, visit www.musicaangelica.org.

BACKGROUND

In 1778, after Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II commissioned the 22-year-old, mid-career Mozart to write a comic opera for his (the emperor's) newly formed opera company, the composer began work on a "rescue opera" entitled *Zaide*, the story of a young woman's attempt to rescue her beloved from pirates. Rescue operas were a popular genre at the time, often with the inclusion of "oriental" elements, reflecting Europe's burgeoning contact and fascination with the Middle East. Mozart, working from a German libretto by Johann Andreas Schachtner, set the action in Turkey, also the setting for his next singspiel, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Always overworked, the composer abandoned the opera in 1780 after writing essentially two acts to compose *Idomeneo*. Re-discovered only after Mozart's death, it didn't receive its first performance until 1866, in Frankfurt.

"Mozart shelved *Zaide* when the emperor's mother, Archduchess Maria Theresa died, and all theatres and opera houses were closed in mourning for one year," explains Maestro Haselböck. "By the time they reopened, Mozart was already on to composing other things." He continues, "While not quite finished, *Zaide* is most certainly a masterwork. Beautiful arias alternate with spoken dialogues, and elements of *buffa* and *seria*, as well as an exotic flair and atmosphere, light up the opera stage. With our emphasis on original instruments and authentic performance practice, Musica Angelica is a perfect match for this gem, and stage director Brian Michaels tells the story in a most poetic way."

"*Zaide* offered us the truly rare opportunity of actually improving an extant Mozart opera," says director Brian Michaels. "The music is wonderful and magical in its youthful exuberance and sensitivity. Wearing his scholar's hat, Martin Haselböck unearthed a spot-on musical addition to provide the missing final ensemble." The opera's libretto and its story are incomplete, Michaels adds, but "as the spoken texts have disappeared, we were given the opportunity to re-think the story and give it a new, playful coherence that the original doesn't possess. Each one of the characters involved has his or her own story line which now blend to create this new version."

Changes did not stop there. "The piece doesn't take place in some fictional desert in Asia Minor, but in the heads and minds of four contemporary persons, including *Zaide*, a bored teenage girl, and Gomatz, a law student who feels enslaved by his studies," Michael

reveals. “The concept may be unusual, but it works. The opera now has a proper climax, with a *lieto fine* (happy ending).”

COLLABORATION WITH LA OPERA

Zaide offers audiences the exciting opportunity to see talented young artists from Los Angeles Opera collaborating with Musica Angelica. Guest artist soprano **Janai Brugger-Orman (Zaide)** is currently working in the Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program at LAO, and tenor **Jesús León (The Sultan)** was an inaugural member of that program. Also in the cast are tenor **Andrew Bidlack (Gomatz)**, a recent graduate of San Francisco Opera’s prestigious Adler Fellowship program who made his New York City Opera debut this season in Strauss’s *Intermezzo*; and baritone **Christian Hilz (Osmin)**, who regularly appears at venues ranging from the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, and The Proms at London’s Royal Albert Hall to the Boston Early Music Festival.

“We have worked with LA Opera in the past when Musica Angelica’s musicians participated in the company’s presentations of Handel’s *Julio Cesare* and *Poppea*,” says Laura Spino, Musica Angelica’s managing director. “Today, we’re delighted to have the opportunity to ‘return the favor’ and welcome these exceptional young artists as members of our cast for *Zaide*. We look forward to further partnerships with LA Opera in the future.”

Tickets for “Zaide” are available at prices from \$15 (student price, with valid ID) to \$55/person. For more information or to order tickets, call 310.458.4504, or visit www.MusicaAngelica.org.

First United Methodist Church is located at 500 East Colorado Blvd., in Pasadena; The Broad Stage is located at 1310 11th Street, in Santa Monica.

THE SINGERS

Soprano Janai Brugger-Orman (Zaide) is a first-year participant in LA Opera's Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program, where she is singing the roles of Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro* under the baton of Plácido Domingo, and the Page in *Rigoletto* under the baton of James Conlon. At LA Opera, Brugger-Orman will also cover the roles of Mrs. Neruda in the world premiere of Daniel Catan's *Il Postino* (cond. Grant Gershon) and the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw* (cond. James Conlon).

In 2007, she participated in the Marilyn Horne Master Class "The Song Continues" at New York's Carnegie Hall. During the fall of 2009 she performed the role of Adina in Donizetti's *Elixir of Love* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in the Neighborhoods Program. This summer she will be a Young Artist in the Merola Opera Program of San Francisco Opera performing scenes from Massenet's *Werther* and Nicolai's *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

A native of Chicago, Ill., Brugger-Orman recently received her Master's Degree from the University of Michigan, having studied with renowned soprano Shirley Verrett. There, she performed the role of Tatiana in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, conducted by Martin Katz and directed by Joshua Major. Brugger-Orman received her Bachelor's Degree from DePaul University, where she studied with Elsa Charlston.

Tenor Andrew Bidlack (Gomatz) begins the 2010–2011 season with his New York City Opera debut as Baron Lummer in Strauss's *Intermezzo*, followed by his return to Florida Grand Opera as Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*). Recent engagements include Count Almaviva (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) at Florida Grand Opera, covers of Emilio (*Partenope*) at New York City Opera and the tenor solo in *Carmina Burana* with the South Dakota Symphony. In July he made his South American debut as Oronte (*Alcina*) with Teatro Municipal de Santiago in Chile.

Bidlack sang Ishmael in a workshop production of Jake Heggie's latest opera, *Moby Dick*, with the San Francisco Opera, and headed to Wolf Trap this season to sing Tancredi in a workshop production of John Musto's new opera *The Inspector*. Bidlack made his San Francisco Opera debut in May 2008 in *The Little Prince*, and has since appeared as

Odoardo (*Ariodante*), Arturo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Count Albert (*Die Tote Stadt*), the Simpleton (*Boris Godunov*), Pedrillo (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Gastone (*La Traviata*), and Ruiz (*Il Trovatore*). A 2007 Merola Opera Program participant, Andrew Bidlack created the role of Charles Carter in the world premiere of Thomas Pasatieri's *The Hotel Casablanca*. The Pennsylvania native has appeared as Rodolfo (*La Bohème*) with the Opera Company of Brooklyn, and Rolla (*I Masnadieri*) with Sarasota Opera. At the Spoleto Festival in Italy, he performed the role of a Guest in Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Saint of Bleeker Street*, which was recorded and released under the Chandos label. Concert performances include the tenor solos in Handel's *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Mozart's *Requiem*.

Selected by Florida Grand Opera, Bidlack is the recipient of the 2009–2010 Gilbert Artist Award, given to a former Young Artist who is returning to sing a role in a mainstage production. Andrew Bidlack is a recent graduate of San Francisco Opera's prestigious Adler Fellowship program.

Tenor Jesús León (The Sultan) was born in Hermosillo, Mexico. He has performed throughout North America and Europe. Operatic performances include Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), the Grange Park Opera; Alfredo (*La Traviata*), West Bay Opera; Nemorino (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), in Mexico with the Sonora Philharmonic; Fenton (*Falstaff*—cover), Glyndebourne; Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*), and Arkady (*A Month in the Country*), Opera Institute, in Boston; Il Duca (*Rigoletto*), San Francisco Lyric Opera; Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Riverside Opera; Almviva (*The Barber of Seville*), Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*—cover) Santa Fe Opera, Cavaradossi (*Tosca*) and Don José (*Carmen*—both covers), Royal Albert Hall.

León made his British debut at the Royal Albert Hall in March 2009 with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in Raymond Gubbay's *Classical Spectacular*. With the Festival Euromediterraneo he sang the tenor solo in *Carmina Burana* in the Roman Amphitheater Ostia Antica.

He has won grants from The Vilcek Foundation, The Nando Peretti Foundation, The

Solti Foundation, the Palm Springs Opera Guild, the Sonora Institute of Culture, the Festival Ortiz Tirado, the American Institute of Fine Arts, and the Opera Buffs Inc. of Los Angeles. In January 2010, he received the prestigious Revelación Juvenil award from the Mexican government and was presented in recital at the Festival Alfonso Ortiz Tirado. He began his operatic training in 2004 at the UCLA Opera Studio, having won a private scholarship to study there. Jesús León was a member of the 2006 Solti Accademia di bel Canto, where he was coached by Mirella Freni, and an inaugural member of the Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program for 2006/2007 at the Los Angeles Opera.

Baritone Christian Hilz (Osmin) regularly appears in the principal musical venues of Europe and America, such as the Vienna Musikverein, the Salzburger Pfingstfestspielen, the Lucerne Festival, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Würzburger Mozartfest, the London Proms in the Royal Albert Hall, the Boston Early Music Festival, the Kunstfest Weimar, the Prague Spring, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival, in the Auditorio Nacional de la Musica in Madrid, at Ansbacher Bachwochen, the Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspielen and the Ruhrtriennale.

Hilz performs baroque, classical and contemporary repertoire, and has worked with such directors as Andrew Parrott, Martin Haselböck, Nicolas McGegan, Joshua Rifkin, Ton Koopman, Ivor Bolton, Krzysztof Penderecki, Helmuth Froschauer, and Juan Pons, and with orchestras such as the Munich Philharmonic, Kölner Rundfunkorchester, London Mozart Players, Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg, Camerata Salzburg, Tonhalle Orchester Zürich, Orquesta Nacional de España, New York Bach Ensemble, Ensemble Tafelmusik Toronto, Wiener Akademie, Norwegian Baroque Orchestra, and Stavanger Symphony.

Along with classical roles his opera repertoire encompasses a variety of parts in baroque and contemporary opera, which he has sung in productions in Vienna, Amsterdam, Madrid, and Potsdam. His recordings include works by Bach, Handel, Telemann, Homilius, Mattheson, Meder, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Lortzing, Klemmstein, Sterk, and Kleiberg. Christian Hilz teaches classes in Voice at the Hochschule der Künste in Bern.

MUSICA ANGELICA

Musica Angelica is led by visionary music director Martin Haselböck, an internationally renowned organist, conductor, composer, and scholar. Regarded as Southern California's premier baroque ensemble, Musica Angelica presents wide-ranging programs encompassing music from the early baroque through the early classical era. Since its inception in 1993, Musica Angelica has produced an annual subscription season of orchestral and chamber concerts in venues throughout Los Angeles County, programming a mixture of known masterworks along with rarely heard gems, and featuring many of the best baroque musicians from across the country and Europe. Guest conductors have included Rinaldo Alessandrini, Giovanni Antonini, Harry Bicket, Paul Goodwin, and Jory Vinikour, among others.

Musica Angelica's first international tour, distinguished by sold-out performances and wide critical acclaim, took place in March 2007 in a joint venture with Haselböck's acclaimed European orchestra, the Wiener Akademie of Vienna. The ensemble presented 13 performances of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in Los Angeles, New York, Savannah (Savannah Music Festival), Mexico, Hungary, Austria, Spain, Italy, and Germany. In September and October 2010, the orchestra completed a successful four-country, 17-day tour of South America as well, with performances taking place in top concert halls throughout the continent. Cities visited included São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Paulínia (Brazil), Santiago (Chile), Montevideo (Uruguay) and Buenos Aires (Argentina).

Martin Haselböck often brings a new twist to performances by juxtaposing traditional baroque music with avant-garde multimedia. One of his creations, *The Infernal Comedy*, directed by and starring John Malkovich, was premiered by Musica Angelica in Santa Monica and enjoyed 23 repeat performances throughout Europe. A new collaboration with Malkovich, *Casanova*, will premiere in 2011, with Musica Angelica taking part in a multi-city US tour in the fall of that year.

Among critical acclaim from the media for Musica Angelica is a *Los Angeles Times* review that said, "Musica Angelica soars in a Baroque gem... a triumph... Haselböck's leadership was nuanced and inspiring." Musica Angelica was described as a "world-class baroque orchestra" by KUSC-FM Classical Music Radio; as "L.A.'s premiere baroque

music ensemble" by *Angeleno Magazine*; and as "a serious and important early-music ensemble, the best of its kind in these parts" by the esteemed late music critic Alan Rich.

In 1998, Musica Angelica released a well-received debut recording, *Vivaldi Concertos for Lute, Oboe, Violin and Strings*. In 2007, the group raised its profile with a contract for four recordings on the Germany-based New Classical Adventure (NCA) label. The first, released in 2007, is Handel's *Acis and Galatea*.

Based in Santa Monica, California, Musica Angelica collaborates with leading performing arts institutions in Southern California including Los Angeles Opera, Long Beach Opera, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Norton Simon Museum, and the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

Musica Angelica was co-founded by Michael Eagan, widely considered one of the foremost lute players in the country, and gambist Mark Chatfield. Eagan passed away in 2004, and Chatfield passed away in 1998.

###