



ROBERT AND MARGRIT
MONDAVI CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
UC DAVIS



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FULL SCHEDULE AND IMAGES

<http://mondaviarts.org/press>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Nov. 21, 2008

American Bach Soloists Returns to the Mondavi Center for Handel's "Messiah"

Davis, Calif.—For the seventh consecutive holiday season, **American Bach Soloists** under the direction of **Jeffrey Thomas** brings **Handel's "Messiah"** to **Jackson Hall** of the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, UC Davis**. The performance takes place **Saturday, Dec. 20, at 7:30 p.m.** Vocal soloists include **soprano Tamara Matthews, countertenor Ian Howell, tenor Aaron Sheehan** and **baritone Jesse Blumberg**.

"**American Bach Soloists** has created a tradition of excellence and musical beauty that we celebrate at the Mondavi Center with the performances of **Handel's 'Messiah'** each holiday season," said **Don Roth**, Mondavi Center executive director. Don't miss this must-see Northern California holiday tradition.

Pricing is \$50/40/25 for regular tickets and \$25/20/12.50 for students and children. Purchase tickets online at MondaviArts.org, through the Mondavi Center box office at 530-754-2787 or 866-754-2787 (toll-free), or at the door. Accommodations for persons with disabilities are available upon request. This event is presented as part of the Mondavi Center's **Classical Favorites Series**.

Named "the best American specialists in early music" by "The Washington Post," the internationally acclaimed **American Bach Soloists (ABS)** continues its annual holiday performance of Handel's timeless oratorio masterwork at the Mondavi Center. The "San Francisco Chronicle" has called ABS performances "a model of what the early music movement can offer at its best: a thoughtful, passionate rendition of great music, attuned to both the stylistic characteristics of the past and to the artistic requirements of our own time." "The Wall Street Journal" named ABS "a flawless ensemble ... a level of musical finesse one rarely encounters," and "San Francisco Classical Voice" declared: "There is nothing routine or settled about their work. Jeffrey Thomas is still pushing the musical Baroque envelope."

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Jeffrey Thomas is artistic and music director of ABS and choral director at the UC Davis Department of Music. He has appeared with the Baltimore, Berkeley, Boston, Detroit, Houston, Rochester, Minnesota, San Francisco and National symphony orchestras; with the Vienna Symphony and the New Japan Philharmonic; with virtually every American baroque orchestra; and in Austria, England, Germany, Italy, Japan and Mexico. Before devoting all of his time to conducting, Thomas 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,” 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. An avid exponent of contemporary music, Thomas has conducted the premieres of new operas, including David Conte’s “Gift of the Magi” and “Firebird Motel.” Thomas has performed lieder recitals at the Smithsonian and song recitals at various universities. He has also appeared with his own vocal chamber music ensemble, L’Aria Viva.

Celebrating its 20th season in 2009, **ABS** has a discography of 17 discs on the Koch International Classics, Delos International and American Bach Soloists labels, including six volumes of Bach cantatas, many performed one on a part. The ensemble’s critically acclaimed disc of Bach’s Mass in B Minor has been called a benchmark recording and a “joyous new performance” (“The Washington Post”). One of the ensemble’s most recent offerings is a historically significant version of **Handel’s “Messiah,”** recorded live during performances in 2004 at the **Mondavi Center** and released in 2005 on the Delos International label. For more information on ABS and Jeffrey Thomas, visit americanbach.org.

- **American Bach Soloists: Handel’s “Messiah”**
- **Sat., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m**
- **Mondavi Center, Jackson Hall**
- **9399 Old Davis Road, Davis, CA 95616 (GPS)**
- **\$50/40/25 regular; \$25/20/12.50 students, children**
- **530-754-2787**
866-754-2787 (toll-free)
530-754-5402 (TDD)
MondaviArts.org