

**PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA & CHORALE
LAUNCHES NEW ERA WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITS
2026-27 SEASON
UNDER INCOMING MUSIC DIRECTOR PETER WHELAN**

**Performances July 2026 – May 2027
in San Francisco, Berkeley, Stanford, and Palo Alto**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (5 March 2026) — **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale** has announced a sensational lineup for *The Power of Music*—its first season curated by newly appointed Music Director **Peter Whelan**. Highlights include a semi-staged production of Handel’s opera *Tolomeo, re d’Egitto*, starring renowned countertenor **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen**. The season also includes the U.S. premiere of the critically acclaimed 1742 Dublin version of Handel’s *Alexander’s Feast (The Power of Music)*; *Baroque Brilliance*, a festive holiday showcase with works by Handel, Bach, and Vivaldi; *Vivaldi and the Oud*, featuring oud soloist **Joseph Tawadros**; and *Baroque on Stage*, a theatrical program led by violin virtuoso **Rachell Ellen Wong**, spotlighting music by Purcell, Rameau, and Geminiani. The season concludes with Haydn’s *The Creation*, featuring peerless soprano **Lucy Crowe**. Subscriptions (\$96-\$465, inclusive of all fees) are on sale now, and single tickets will be available beginning June 2. For more information or to purchase, the public may visit philharmonia.org or call 415-295-1900.

“This season is about exploring the full spectrum of what Baroque music can offer,” said Music Director **Peter Whelan**. “From intimate theatrical moments to grand choral works, I want to highlight the dialogue between orchestra, chorale, soloists, and the audience. There’s a sense of discovery in every piece—whether it’s a familiar favorite or a premiere—and my hope is that audiences will experience the joy, color, and emotional depth that make this repertoire so timeless.”

In chronological order, the 2026/27 season programming is as follows:

Handel’s *Tolomeo*

July 23-24, 2026

San Francisco and Berkeley

Philharmonia launches with a special presentation: a semi-staged production of Handel’s opera *Tolomeo, re d’Egitto*, which follows the exiled Egyptian king, Tolomeo. Combining historically informed performance with theatrical elements to heighten the drama, the opera delivers introspective arias that showcase Handel’s gift for dramatizing inner turmoil, placing character and storytelling at the forefront alongside the acclaimed orchestra. Music Director **Peter Whelan**

conducts and leading Baroque interpreter **James Darrah Black** directs a cast led by countertenor **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen** as Tolomeo, soprano **Lauren Snouffer** as Seleuce, soprano **Nicole Heaston** as Elisa, countertenor **Kangmin Justin Kim** as Alessandro, and bass-baritone **Dashon Burton** as Araspe.

Dates/Locations for Philharmonia's Handel's *Tolomeo*

Thursday, July 23 at 7:30pm | San Francisco: Herbst Theatre

Friday, July 24 at 7:30pm | Berkeley: First Congregational Church

Handel's *The Power of Music*

November 11-14, 2026

Stanford, San Francisco, and Berkeley

Philharmonia's five-concert subscription series opens in November with the U.S. premiere of the critically acclaimed 1742 Dublin version of Handel's *Alexander's Feast (The Power of Music)*. Centered on a banquet honoring Alexander the Great, this piece journeys through joy, grief, and rage, as the poet Timotheus uses his song to guide the room from pride to tenderness. This expressive version gives every participant, from soloists to chorale and orchestra, their own dramatic moments as the story unfolds. Music Director **Peter Whelan** leads the performance, featuring soprano **Sherezade Panthaki**, mezzo-soprano **Rachael Wilson**, tenor **James Way**, and the Philharmonia Chorale under the direction of **Valérie Sainte-Agathe**.

Dates/Locations for Philharmonia's *The Power of Music*

Wednesday, November 11 at 7:30pm | Stanford: Bing Concert Hall

Friday, November 13 at 7:30pm | San Francisco: Herbst Theatre

Saturday, November 14 at 2:30pm | Berkeley: First Congregational Church

Baroque Brilliance

December 3-5, 2026

Palo Alto, San Francisco, and Berkeley

HANDEL "Let the Bright Seraphim" from *Samson*
MARIANNA MARTINES *O virgo, cui salute debet orbis*
TELEMANN *Burlesque de Quixotte*, TWV 55:G10
C.P.E. BACH Concerto for violoncello in A major, Wq 172
J.S. BACH *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*, BWV 51

Philharmonia ushers in the holiday season with ***Baroque Brilliance***, a December program showcasing the works of Handel, Martines, Telemann, C.P.E. Bach, and J.S. Bach. The concert opens with Handel's "Let the Bright Seraphim" from *Samson*, a jubilant and heroic piece featuring virtuosic soprano and blazing trumpet. Next, audiences will hear the West Coast premiere of a newly rediscovered work by Viennese composer Marianna Martines, *O virgo, cui salute debet orbis*. The program continues with Telemann's *Burlesque de Quixotte*, a playful and vivid orchestral portrait of Cervantes's *Don Quixote of La Mancha*. The evening concludes with

two spirited works by father-son duo C.P.E. Bach and J.S. Bach: Concerto for violoncello in A major and *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*, each capturing the expressive mastery of 18th-century music. Together, these pieces celebrate the distinct styles of each composer, offering a dazzling display of Baroque artistry. Grammy-nominated conductor **Patrick Dupré Quigley** leads the orchestra, with soprano **Kathryn Mueller**, cellist **William Skeen**, oboist **Gonzalo X. Ruiz**, and trumpeter **Kathryn Adduci** as featured soloists.

Dates/Locations for Philharmonia's *Baroque Brilliance*

Thursday, December 3 at 7:30pm | Palo Alto: First United Methodist Church

Friday, December 4 at 7:30pm | San Francisco: Herbst Theatre

Saturday, December 5 at 2:30pm | Berkeley: First Congregational Church

Philharmonia SESSIONS

The Art of the Oud

January 30, 2027

Berkeley

A Special Co-Presentation with The Freight, Berkeley

Kicking off the new year, Philharmonia will present the first of its two SESSIONS concerts—an intimate series spotlighting individual artists and distinctive musical voices in relaxed, informal settings designed for close listening. *The Art of the Oud* features Cairo-born, eight-time ARIA Award winner **Joseph Tawadros**, one of the world's leading masters of the oud—the Arabic fretless lute and ancestor of the theorbo and the modern guitar. In a rare U.S. solo appearance, Tawadros will perform a curated program of original works inspired by the Arabic modal system (maqam), seamlessly blending Baroque, jazz, and folk influences.

Dates/Locations for Philharmonia's SESSIONS *The Art of the Oud*

Saturday, January 30 at 8:00pm | Berkeley: The Freight

Vivaldi and the Oud

February 5-7, 2027

San Francisco, Berkeley, and Stanford

VIVALDI Overture to *L'Olimpiade*

TARIK O'REGAN Concerto for Oud, Strings & Percussion

VIVALDI Concerti for multiple violins from *L'Estro armónico*

Next, Philharmonia will present *Vivaldi and the Oud*, featuring special guest **Joseph Tawadros** on the oud, under the baton of Music Director **Peter Whelan**. The program opens with the Overture to *L'Olimpiade* by Vivaldi, a vibrant and theatrical curtain-raiser full of the composer's signature color. Next is the world premiere of an oud concerto by Philharmonia Baroque Composer-in-Residence **Tarik O'Regan** that spotlights the ancient, plucked instrument in a striking solo role against the string orchestra. The program concludes with a selection of concerti

from Vivaldi's *L'Estro armonico*, a landmark work that transformed instrumental music in the early 18th century.

Dates/Locations for Philharmonia's *Vivaldi and the Oud*

Friday, February 5 at 7:30pm | San Francisco: Herbst Theatre

Saturday, February 6 at 2:30pm | Berkeley: First Congregational Church

Sunday, February 7 at 2:30pm | Stanford: Bing Concert Hall

Baroque on Stage

March 4-6, 2027

Palo Alto, San Francisco, and Berkeley

PURCELL Music for the Theatre from *Timon of Athens*, *The Virtuous Wife*, *The Gordian Knot Untied*, *The Indian Queen*, and *The Fairy Queen*

RAMEAU Orchestral Suite from *Les fêtes d'Hébé*, *Dardanus*, *Les surprises de l'Amour*, *Les Indes galantes*, and *Les Boréades*

C.P.E BACH Symphony in B minor, H. 661, Wq 182/5

VIVALDI Violin Concerto in E minor, RV 273/278

GEMINIANI *La Follia* Variations (arr. Michi Wiancko)

In the spring, Philharmonia presents ***Baroque on Stage***, a dramatic program featuring works by Purcell, Rameau, C.P.E. Bach, Vivaldi, and Geminiani. Curated and led by internationally acclaimed violinist **Rachell Ellen Wong**, who will also be featured as a soloist. The program highlights music originally written for the stage, opening with Purcell's Music for the Theatre, a work full of elegance, wit, and playful charm, before moving to selections by Rameau, which shimmer with the grandeur and color of French Baroque. The program intensifies with C.P.E. Bach's stormy Symphony in B minor, leading into the dramatic sweep of Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in E minor. The performance concludes with Geminiani's *La Follia* Variations, arranged by Michi Wiancko, leaving audiences with a thrilling finale.

Dates/Locations for Philharmonia's *Baroque on Stage*

Thursday, March 4 at 7:30pm | Palo Alto: First United Methodist Church

Friday, March 5 at 7:30pm | San Francisco: Herbst Theatre

Saturday, March 6 at 2:30pm | Berkeley: First Congregational Church

The Creation

April 9-11, 2027

San Francisco, Berkeley, and Stanford

Peter Whelan concludes his inaugural season by conducting Haydn's ***The Creation***. Soloists include one of Britain's greatest lyric sopranos, **Lucy Crowe**, internationally renowned tenor **Nicholas Phan**, and commanding bass-baritone **Enrico Lagasca**, accompanied by the Philharmonia Chorale under the direction of **Valérie Sainte-Agathe**. Considered one of the monuments of Western music, *The Creation* overflows with enlightenment optimism, offering an

awe-filled celebration of nature and humanity's place within it. Drawing inspiration from the Genesis story of the Christian Bible and texts from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the work unfolds in three parts, tracing the formation of the world and the emergence of life through rich musical expression.

Dates/Locations for Philharmonia's *The Creation*

Friday, April 9 at 7:30pm | San Francisco: Herbst Theatre

Saturday, April 10 at 2:30pm | Berkeley: First Congregational Church

Sunday, April 11 at 2:30pm | Stanford: Bing Concert Hall

Philharmonia SESSIONS
Alexi Kenney with Philharmonia Baroque

May 6, 2027

Palo Alto

J.S. BACH "Erkenne mich, mein Hüter" from *St. Matthew Passion*
FANNY MENDELSSOHN String Quartet in E-flat major, H277
FELIX MENDELSSOHN String Octet in E-flat major, Op. 20

Rounding out the season, Philharmonia will present the second of its two SESSIONS concerts: ***Alexi Kenney with Philharmonia Baroque***. The program features violinist **Alexi Kenney** alongside Scholar-in-Residence **Francesco Spagnolo** and **Philharmonia Chamber Players**. In this illuminating program, audiences will trace family trees, explore the fascinating world of music manuscript collecting, and discover how the enduring legacies of the Bach and Mendelssohn families continue to shape the music we love today.

Dates/Locations for Philharmonia's SESSIONS *Alexi Kenney with Philharmonia Baroque*
Thursday, May 6 at 7:30pm | Palo Alto: Oshman Family JCC

ABOUT PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA & CHORALE

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Choral is based in the San Francisco Bay Area and is one of America's premier ensembles dedicated to historically rooted performance of Baroque, Classical, and early Romantic music. Founded in 1981 by harpsichordist and educator Laurette Goldberg, Philharmonia has earned widespread acclaim for its vibrant, period-authentic interpretations using historical instruments and techniques. It was led by Nicholas McGegan for 35 years, followed by Richard Egarr in 2020. In 2026, Peter Whelan becomes the fourth music director in the company's 45-year history. Among the most recorded orchestras in the world, Philharmonia boasts a discography of nearly 50 recordings, including a coveted archival performance of mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson in Berlioz's *Les Nuits D'été*, and a Grammy-nominated recording of Haydn symphonies. In 2020, Philharmonia released three groundbreaking recordings: a full collection of commissioned works by Pulitzer Prize winner Caroline Shaw, a selection of arias sung by rising star contralto Avery Amereau, and Handel's *Saul* with countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen. The ensemble's reach extends across the globe through acclaimed tours, and collaborations with some of the world's leading artists.

Philharmonia is committed to bringing the music of the past to life with energy and relevance for today's audiences. Through its Bay Area subscription series, groundbreaking programs such as SESSIONS, and robust education and community engagement efforts, Philharmonia offers both depth and innovation. Anchored by a world-class chorale and a roster of period instrument specialists who teach and perform internationally, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale continues to set the standard for historically informed performance in the 21st century. Baroque Orchestra & Chorale continues to set the standard for historically informed performance in the 21st century. Baroque Orchestra & Chorale continues to set the standard for historically informed performance in the 21st century.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale** has announced a sensational lineup for *The Power of Music*—its first season curated by newly appointed Music Director **Peter Whelan**. Highlights include a semi-staged production of Handel's opera *Tolomeo, re d'Egitto*, starring renowned countertenor **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen**. The season also includes the U.S. premiere of the critically acclaimed 1742 Dublin version of Handel's *Alexander's Feast (The Power of Music)*; *Baroque Brilliance*, a festive holiday showcase with works by Handel, Bach, and Vivaldi; *Vivaldi and the Oud*, featuring oud soloist **Joseph Tawadros**; and *Baroque on Stage*, a theatrical program led by violin virtuoso **Rachell Ellen Wong**, spotlighting music by Purcell, Rameau, and Geminiani. The season concludes with Haydn's *The Creation*, featuring peerless soprano **Lucy Crowe**.

WHEN: Performances July 23, 2026 to May 6, 2027 in San Francisco, Berkeley, Stanford, and Palo Alto

TICKETS: For subscriptions (From \$96 for three concerts, to \$465 for five, inclusive of all fees) or for more information, the public may call **415-295-1900** or visit philharmonia.org. Presale tickets to *Tolomeo* (\$40-\$175), *The Art of the Oud* (\$65 - \$90), and Alexi Kenney with Philharmonia Baroque (\$65)) will be available to subscribers March 5. Single tickets (\$40-\$175) will be available beginning June 2.

INFO: For more information or to purchase tickets, the public may visit philharmonia.org or call **415-295-1900** (open Monday through Friday 10:00am-4:00pm)

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PHOTOS:

Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<https://cbpr.co/press/philharmonia26-27>