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HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY PRESENTS ROMANTIC BRAHMS

*Program includes world premiere of a choral ode to G. F. Handel
by American composer Tom Vignieri and a tribute to Mendelssohn*

- WHEN:** Friday, March 20 at 8.00pm
Sunday, March 22 at 8.00pm
- WHERE:** Symphony Hall, 301 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02115
- TICKETS:** Tickets range from \$15-70, and may be purchased online at www.handelandhaydn.org, by phone at 617 266 3605, or in person at the Handel and Haydn office, Horticultural Hall, 300 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston (M-F 10am-6pm).
- REPERTOIRE:** Vignieri: Fanfare of Voices (Ode to G. F. Handel; **world premiere**)
Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64
Brahms: Symphony No. 1 in C Minor
- DETAILS:** Handel and Haydn's Principal Conductor **Grant Llewellyn** explores the Romantic era with Brahms' Symphony No. 1, a masterpiece the composer spent 20 years perfecting to honor the legacy of Beethoven and Haydn. In keeping with the *Celebration 2009* theme, the program also pays tribute to Mendelssohn's 200th birthday with his beautifully lyric Violin Concerto performed by brilliant young virtuoso **Ilya Gringolts**.

The evening concerts opens with a world premiere of a new choral piece by local composer **Tom Vignieri** in honor of Handel in this 250th anniversary year of his death. Mr. Vignieri was the Artistic Administrator at the Society from 1993-2003 and is currently a producer at *From the Top*. This piece was commissioned by the Handel and Haydn Society to commemorate Handel's anniversary and also as a gift to Mr. Llewellyn honoring his last concert with the Society in a leadership role. It is a fitting way to acknowledge the artistic contributions Mr. Vignieri and Mr. Llewellyn have made to the Society over the years and also honor their longstanding close friendship.

This program is partially funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and a gift from Alice E. Richmond and David Rosenbloom.

WHO:

As Music Director of the Handel and Haydn Society from 2001-2006, **Grant Llewellyn** earned the acclaim of both critics and audiences and established his presence as an engaging and dynamic force in Boston's musical life. In the 2006-2007 Season, Mr. Llewellyn took on the title of Principal Conductor.

Llewellyn was appointed Music Director of the Handel and Haydn Society in 2000 and began his tenure in the 2001-2002 Season. In his five seasons Mr. Llewellyn led the Handel and Haydn Society Orchestra and Chorus in programs including Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven Symphonies No. 3 and 9, Bach's St. Matthew Passion and Mass in B Minor, Brahms' *Requiem*, and a fully staged production of Monteverdi's *Vespers* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with the acclaimed director Chen Shi-Zheng. He has recorded three CD's with the Society: FOR UNTO US (Renaissance motets by Byrd and Tallis), PEACE (including works by Victoria, Thompson, Elgar and Barber); and, most recently, a recording of traditional and modern Christmas carols, ALL IS BRIGHT, released in fall 2005.

Mr. Llewellyn played an active role in the educational and community outreach programs for which the Society is known. He conducted Participatory Youth Concerts featuring the Handel and Haydn Orchestra and choirs from Boston-area high schools. He led the Handel and Haydn Youth Chorus, along with five other Boston-area children's choruses, at the 2003 opening ceremony of the Leonard Zakim Bunker Hill Memorial Bridge. He featured the Young Women's Chorus in a holiday subscription program at Jordan Hall in 2004 and included the Youth Chorus in performances of "Holiday Sing" in December 2005 at Symphony Hall.

Winner of the 1998 International Violin Competition "Premio Paganini," **Ilya Gringolts** has appeared with the Chicago Symphony, UBS Verbier Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic, and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic. Present and forthcoming solo engagements include the Orchestre de Venezuela and Mahler Chamber Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony, Bournemouth Symphony, and Scottish Chamber Orchestra. His recital highlights include appearances at the Verbier and Lucerne Festivals, the Beethoven Bonn Festival, the Louvre and the Colmar Festival, together with annual invitations from the Milan Serate Musicali. In June 2008, Mr. Gringolts gave the premiere by Sir Peter Maxwell Davis of his new Violin Sonata at St. Magnus Festival.

Ilya Gringolts continues to be active in the recording studios and, in addition to his three previous Deutsche Grammophon discs, this past year he recorded the Beethoven Triple Concerto with Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela for DG. In February 2008, his solo violin disc of Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst was released on Hyperion. Most recently, he won a Gramophone Award for his Taneyev Chamber Music CD for DG. Ilya plays a Ruggeri violin loaned to him by Otto Karl Schenk, Bern/Switzerland.

Tom Vignieri is a composer and classical music producer. He has served as director of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute and as artistic administrator of the Handel and

Haydn Society under Christopher Hogwood and Grant Llewellyn. He is currently music producer for *From the Top*, a nationally distributed NPR and PBS program that celebrates America's best young classical musicians.

He is a composer with a particular affinity for vocal and choral repertory and has had pieces performed and broadcast across North America. His trio for tenor, oboe and piano entitled *My Mother on an Evening in Late Summer* has been performed at Lincoln Center and his setting of *Hodie Christus natus est*, written for the Handel and Haydn Society recording *All is Bright*, was premiered at Symphony Hall, Boston and given special mention in record reviews by *The Boston Globe*, *Gramophone Magazine* and *The Daily Telegraph of London*. It was recently performed at the Kennedy Center and featured on a national Christmas Day broadcast in Canada by the CBC.

His new work *Fanfare of Voices* features four antiphonal choirs, trumpets, drums and organ and is set to words drawn from *Ode to St. Cecilia's Day* by John Dryden. A text that Handel himself notably set in 1739.

ASSOCIATED EVENT: **Lecture, demonstration and discussion at the Boston Public Library**
"Romanticizing Haydn"
Friday, March 13, 6.00-7.30pm
Abbey Room, Boston Public Library

Baroque specialist and MIT professor Teresa Neff will discuss Haydn's symphonic legacy and his influence on Mendelssohn and Brahms. This engaging presentation will include live performance of works for voice by Haydn and Brahms as well as a display of hidden treasures from the archives of the Boston Public Library. The event bridges a connection between the symphonies of Haydn and Brahms in preparation for the Society's Romantic Brahms program.

Tickets are \$25 each. Order by phone at 617 266 3605, at www.handelandhaydn.org, or in person at the Handel and Haydn Society Box Office, 300 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston (M-F 10am-6pm). Tickets are also available at the door by cash only.

FOR MEDIA ONLY: **Complimentary press tickets for this concert program are available by request. To reserve your tickets, please RSVP by Tuesday, March 17 to press@handelandhaydn.org.**

ABOUT HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY

The Handel and Haydn Society is a professional chorus and period instrument orchestra that is internationally recognized as a leader in the field of Historically Informed Performance, a revelatory style that uses the instruments and techniques of the time in which the music was composed. Founded in Boston in 1815, the Society is the oldest continuously performing arts organization in the United States and has a longstanding commitment to excellence and innovation: it gave the American premieres of Handel's *Messiah* (1818), Haydn's *The Creation* (1819), Verdi's *Requiem* (1878) and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (1889). The Society today, under the leadership of Artistic Director designate Harry Christophers, Artistic Advisor Sir Roger Norrington, Principal Conductor Grant Llewellyn, and Conductor Laureate Christopher Hogwood, is committed to its mission "to perform Baroque and Classical music at the highest levels of artistic excellence and to share that music with as large and diverse an audience as possible." The Society is widely known through its local subscription concerts, tours, concert broadcasts on National Public Radio, and recordings. The Society's *Lamentations and Praises* won a 2002 Grammy Award, and its two most recent CDs, *All is Bright* and *PEACE*,

appeared simultaneously in the top ten on Billboard Magazine's classical music chart. Since 1985, the Society's award-winning Karen S. & George D. Levy Educational Outreach Program has fostered the knowledge and performance of classical music among young people including in underserved schools and communities. This school year alone, the program will bring music education and vocal training to more than 10,000 students in the Greater Boston area.

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