The Atlanta Baroque Orchestra
John Hsu, Artistic Director

Glorious Vivaldi:
Let the Voices be Heard

John Hsu,
Artistic Director & Conductor

Sunday 9 November 2008
3:00 p.m.
Peachtree Road United Methodist Church
3180 Peachtree Road NW
Atlanta, Georgia
WORKS BY ANTONIO VIVALDI  
(1678-1741)

Concerto in A Minor, Op. 5, No. 8, RV 155
for 2 violins, strings, and continuo
    Allegro
    Largo e spiritoso
    Allegro

Concerto in D Minor, RV 481
for bassoon, strings, and continuo
    Allegro
    Largo
    Allegro molto

Concerto in E Minor, RV 155
for strings, and continuo
    Allegro
    Largo
    Allegro

Concerto in F Major, RV 455
for oboe, strings, and continuo
    Allegro giusto
    Grave
    Allegro

intermission

Gloria in D Major, RV 589
for 2 sopranos, alto, chorus, 
    trumpet, oboe, strings, and continuo
    Chorus: Gloria in excelsis
    Chorus: Et in terra pax
    Duet (2 sopranos): Laudamus te
    Chorus: Gratias agimus tibi
    Chorus: Propter magnam gloriam tuam
    Aria (soprano): Domine Deus
    Chorus: Domine Fili unigenite
    Alto and chorus: Domine Deus, Agnus Dei
    Chorus: Qui tollis peccata mundi
    Aria (alto): Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris
    Chorus: Quoniam tu solus sanctus
    Chorus: Cum Sancto Spiritu

Karen Clarke and Valerie Arsenault, violins

Keith Collins, bassoon

George Riordan, oboe

Peachtree Road United Methodist
Chamber Singers
Scott Atchison, director
The Atlanta Baroque Orchestra was founded under the leadership of Lyle Nordstrom, along with founding-members Catherine Bull, Jeanne Johnson, Daniel Pyle, and Eckhart Richter, who felt the need for a permanent, professional, historical-instrument orchestra in the Southeast. The unique, transparent sheen of “early” instruments, coupled with their capability of a delightful variety of articulations, allows voices and instruments to blend into a unified, yet clear, sound that is very difficult to achieve with “modern” instruments. Since its founding in 1997, the ABO has been applauded for its freshness and verve, and for its delightful, convincing performances of a wide range of earlier works.

The Orchestra received initial generous support from the Atlanta Early Music Alliance and a variety of individuals, and has also depended on donations of time and money from the musicians themselves. The ABO is a not-for-profit corporation based in Atlanta, and is 501(c)3 (tax-exempt). Contributions, which are tax-deductible, are greatly appreciated and are central to the survival of a venture such as this. If you would like to support the ABO and its future programming, please send checks made out to “The Atlanta Baroque Orchestra,” 303 Augusta Avenue SE, Atlanta, GA 30315. There is also a great opportunity for friends of the arts in the community to serve on the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra board. Please visit our website at www.atlantabaroque.org for more information on the ABO.

John Hsu is the Old Dominion Foundation Professor of Music Emeritus at Cornell University, where he taught for 50 years (1955-2005). He was the founder and conductor of the erstwhile Apollo Ensemble (a period instrument chamber orchestra) and a renowned virtuoso player of the viola da gamba and baryton. As both a conductor and an instrumentalist, he has been awarded grants by The Fund for U.S. Artists at International Festivals and Exhibitions, a public/private partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, the United States Information Agency, The Rockefeller Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trusts. He has performed throughout North America and Europe, and made award-winning recordings. Among them are his CD of Haydn Baryton Trios (with violist David Miller and cellist Fortunato Arico), which was chosen Winner in the Music Retailers Association's Annual Award for Excellence in London, 1989; and his CD Symphonies for the Esterhazy Court by Joseph Haydn (with the Apollo Ensemble), which was nominated for the 1996 International Cannes Classical Music Award. In recognition of his edition of the complete instrumental works of Marin Marais (1656-1728), the most important composer of music for the viola da gamba, and for his performances and recordings of French baroque music for the viola da gamba, the French government conferred on him the knighthood Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in May of 2000.

He is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, which awarded him the Honorary Doctor of Music degree in 1971, and the Outstanding Alumni Award in 2003. He is also Artistic Director Emeritus of the Aston Magna Foundation for Music and the Humanities, the pioneering musical organization in the historical performance movement in this country, founded by Albert Fuller in 1972.
Program Notes

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) is the most prolific composer of Baroque orchestral music. His vast output totals over five hundreds concertos, which includes solo concertos for various instruments and orchestra, concerti grossi for groups of two or more soloists with orchestra, and ripieno concerti, that is, orchestral works without soloists. About half of Vivaldi’s solo concertos are for the violin, among which the most famous today are the Four Seasons. Other important concertos include twenty oboe concertos, thirty-nine bassoon concertos, as well as sixty-three concertos for orchestra without soloists. It is through his concertos that Vivaldi exerted profound influence on his contemporaries, including J. S. Bach, Handel, and Telemann.

The four concertos in today’s program, representing the three kinds of concertos, are structurally conceived in the three-movement, fast-slow-fast mold: the first movement in ritornello form, featuring the alternation between orchestral and soloistic sonorities and emphasizing the change of tonalities; the second continuing lyrical melodies or expressive harmonies, and the third a dance-like finale. Nonetheless, each concerto possesses its own musical identity with special musical characteristics.

Concerto in A Minor, RV 522, is the third of four concertos for two violins and orchestra in the collection of twelve concertos for violins, Opus 3, entitled “L’estro armonico,” published in 1711. As the title suggests, this is music inspired by harmony. With the presence of two solo instruments, this concerto is characterized by an abundance of musical dialogues, duets and imitations, particularly in the tuneful second movement.

The two concertos for double reed instruments are clear indications of the surprisingly high level of performance skills that Vivaldi’s wind players possessed. The Oboe Concerto in F, RV 455, consists of two whimsical fast movements characterized by the frequency of irregular phrase structures, and a slow movement that is a duet for oboe and violin. By comparison, the Bassoon Concerto in D Minor, RV 481, is a weightier and more serious work. This may be due to the lower tessitura of the bassoon, the nature of the Larghetto second movement, which is an arietta with a short introduction in dotted rhythm, and the frequent appearance in the two fast movements of extended melodic and harmonic sequences with four or even five repetitions instead of the more usual three.

Concerto in E Minor, RV 133 is a concerto without soloists. It consists of three distinctive movements of contrasting orchestral sonorities and expressive character. The first movement features the extensive use of harmonic sequences, the second a melodic sequence built upon a stepwise bass-line moving from the tonic note to the dominant, followed by three elaborated cadences; and the third a rondo that alternates between a short refrain with three new alternating couplets of increasing lengths.

Vivaldi was born in Venice and died in Vienna, but was also active in Mantua and Rome for many years. It is most likely that the initial impetus for writing concertos was his appointment as maestro di violino at the Pio Ospedale della Pietà in Venice in 1703. The Pietà was a kind of orphanage for girls in Venice that had an exceptionally strong music program. Vivaldi’s duties there included directing the orchestra, teaching the violinists, and composing music for their performances. He held the position until 1716, but continued to compose music for this institution for many years following.

His duties at the Pietà also included composing sacred music for the weekly performances of its choir and orchestra. The Gloria in D Major, RV 589, composed in 1715, is undoubtedly the composer’s best-
known sacred choral work. This joyful setting of the traditional hymn of praise from the Roman Catholic Latin Mass consists of twelve sections. The translation of the text and the performing forces called for in each section are as follows:

1. Glory be to God on high  
   (for chorus, string orchestra, oboe and trumpet)

2. And on earth peace to men of good will  
   (for chorus and string orchestra)

3. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee  
   (for two sopranos and string orchestra)

4. We give thanks to Thee  
   (for chorus and string orchestra)

5. For Thy great glory  
   (for chorus and string orchestra)

6. O Lord God, King of Heaven, God the Father Almighty  
   (for soprano solo, oboe, and basso continuo)

7. O Lord the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ  
   (for chorus and string orchestra)

8. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father  
   (for alto solo, chorus, and string orchestra)

9. Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer  
   (chorus and string orchestra)

10. Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us  
    (for alto solo and string orchestra)

11. Since Thou alone art holy, Thou alone the Lord, Thou alone the most High, Jesus Christ  
    (for chorus, string orchestra, oboe and trumpet)

12. With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father  
    (for chorus, string orchestra, oboe and trumpet)

Notes by John Hsu
the Old way of Playing the Fiddle.

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The Atlanta Baroque Orchestra would like to thank the following persons and establishments for contributing their time, talents, and energy in regard to the details of ABO concerts.

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and Camilla Cruikshank & Judy Koch
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The ABO would also like to acknowledge the several thousand dollars worth of rehearsal time that has been graciously given to the orchestra by its members. These concerts could not be given without their enthusiasm and support.

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