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NMSO Classics Season Begins with 'Messiah' Dec. 18-20

Concerts to Feature Nationally Acclaimed NMSO Chorus

(ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., Dec. 4, 2009) – The New Mexico Symphony Orchestra's 2009/2010 Classics season begins with George Frideric Handel's choral masterpiece and perennial favorite *Messiah*.

The NMSO has not presented *Messiah* since 2005. Three performances to be conducted by Roger Melone, the NMSO's resident conductor and chorus director, and to feature the NMSO Chorus will take place Dec. 18- 20. Melone will conduct from his seat at the harpsichord.

Program: Handel's *Messiah*, performed in its entirety

Who: New Mexico Symphony Orchestra with Roger Melone, conductor
NMSO Chorus
Mary Ellen Callahan, soprano
Scot Cameron, countertenor
Michael Colvin, tenor
David Grogan, baritone

When & Where: Friday, Dec. 18, 8 p.m., Popejoy Hall in Albuquerque
Saturday, Dec. 19, 6 p.m., Popejoy Hall in Albuquerque
Sunday, Dec. 20, 2 p.m., National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque

Tickets & Info: Tickets from \$10-\$60 at NMSO.org, 505-881-8999 or the NMSO Box Office (4407 Menaul NE, just east of Washington, in Albuquerque)

Student discounts of 20%—for those up to 12th grade or any age with valid student ID

Student Rush—will be sold at \$8 each, limited to two tickets per student with valid ID and available beginning 90 minutes prior to concert at the venue box office.

About the NMSO Chorus

This is the first of four Classics programs in the 2009/2010 season featuring the all-volunteer NMSO Chorus. The current season marks the 37th anniversary of the chorus. Under Roger Melone's direction

since 1983, the chorus has gained a national reputation. In 1999 the chorus received the Albuquerque Arts Alliance Bravo Award for Excellence in Musical Performance for its 1998 performances of Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. And in 2006, Christopher Seaman, music director of the Rochester (N.Y.) Philharmonic Orchestra, invited the NMSO Chorus to perform Mozart's Requiem with his orchestra at the 2006 Bravo! Vail Valley (Colo.) Music Festival. Accolades from the audience, conductor and orchestra were overwhelming, leading to return engagements in 2007 and 2008 to perform Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and *Carmina Burana* with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

About the Soloists

Soprano Mary Ellen Callahan also appears frequently as soloist with orchestras and choruses across the nation. Her repertoire includes Bach's *St. John Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio*, Mahler's Eighth Symphony, and Handel's *Messiah*. In a performance of *Carmina Burana* in the Metropolitan Opera house with American Ballet Theatre, the New York Times' comment was "first-rate." She was a soloist with conductor Louis Langrée at the Mostly Mozart Festival. Ms. Callahan has performed with the Washington Bach Consort and previously has been engaged by them in the capital and in Germany to sing Bach's *Missae Breves* and B Minor Mass, and the J.S. and C.P.E. Bach Magnificats and many cantatas. Also in DC, she has performed Bach's B Minor Mass and Mozart's Great Mass in C Minor at the Kennedy Center, for which the Washington Post hailed her as "radiant and wondrously agile." In her debut performance with the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra with Roger Melone in Mozart's Great Mass in C Minor, critics said "she radiated a purity and warmth which pierced the heart." She is a frequent soloist with the American Bach Soloists in San Francisco, singing the *Easter Oratorio*, the Magnificat, various cantatas, and the B Minor Mass. For more information, visit www.maryellencallahan.com.

Countertenor Scot Cameron resides in Dallas, Texas and enjoys a musical career as a classical artist, conductor, vocal clinician, church musician, and private voice instructor. Noted as a "polished performer with a rich, expressive voice" (Dallas Morning News), Mr. Cameron has spent the past eleven years performing throughout the US and abroad, including Israel, Latvia, Spain, France, England, China, Brazil, Taiwan, and Singapore. Performances include *Les Arts Flourissants* with Concert Royale at Princeton University, *Carmina Burana* with the Fort Worth Dallas Ballet, Haydn's *Creation* with the Hallelujah Oratorio Society in Singapore, *Messiah* with the Dallas Bach Society, *On Wenlock Edge* with the Spectrum Chamber Ensemble, and Vivaldi's *Stabat Mater* and *Nisi Dominus* with the Orchestra of New Spain. He made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2003 singing *Carmina Burana* with the Sacramento Choral Society and the New England Philharmonic. Mr. Cameron has also performed with the Early Music Foundation of New York, Rochester Bach Festival, Publick Musick, Fort Worth Early Music, Orpheus Chamber Chorale, New York Baroque Dance Company, the Orquestra Sinfonica y Coro de Radio Television Espanola en Madrid, and the Fort Worth Symphony. He is featured on the Dorian recording, Madrid 1752, "Sacred Music from the Chapel of Spain" and the recently released recording of *Alexander's Feast* by the Bach Sinfonia of Washington. For more information, visit www.scotcameron.com.

Tenor Michael Colvin has been praised as "one of the finest lyric voices in the land" (Globe and Mail) and "one of the most beautiful young lyric tenor instruments around." He has appeared to universal critical acclaim on opera and concert stages around the world with performances throughout Canada, the United States, Britain and Europe. An avid concert and recital artist, Michael Colvin's recent orchestral appearances include Mozart's Requiem for Chicago's Grant Park Festival and Colorado's Vail Valley Music Festival, Handel's *Messiah* with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (Glover), Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra (McGegan) and National Arts Centre Orchestra (Pinnock), Schubert's Mass in A-flat with Helmut Rilling and Festival Vancouver, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (Tovey), l'Orchestre symphonique de Quebec (Talmi), Elora Festival and Festival de Lanuadière and Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* and Verdi's Requiem for the Elora Festival of the Arts. For more information, visit www.michaelcolvin.com.

Baritone David Grogan has performed extensively throughout Texas and New Mexico to rave reviews. The Dallas Morning News hailed Grogan as the "perfect Christus" after a performance of the St. Matthew Passion with the Dallas Bach Society, and the Albuquerque Tribune, in reference to a performance of Messiah with the NMSO said, "Grogan had all the range and power required of the part, sounding like the voice of doom in 'The people that walked in darkness' and the light of revelation in 'The trumpet shall sound.'" Recent performances include Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (in its Texas premiere) with the Round Top International Music Festival, Bach's B Minor Mass with the Houston Chamber Chorus, Haydn's Creation with the Austin (Texas) Choral Symposium, Ned Rorem's Evidence of Things Not Seen at Spivey Hall, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the San Angelo (Texas) Symphony, and Mozart's Great Mass in C Minor with the Orpheus Chamber Singers.

About the NMSO

The New Mexico Symphony Orchestra is the official orchestra of the State of New Mexico, serving over 130,000 people each year through its Classics, Pops and Symphony Under the Stars series, as well as many free NMSO Family Concerts. The NMSO is the largest non-governmental provider of music education in New Mexico and has also been recognized by the Mellon Foundation for its innovative community engagement efforts. The NMSO is under the baton of Music Director Guillermo Figueroa and Resident Conductor and Chorus Director Roger Melone.

For more information about the NMSO, visit nmso.org.

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