

MOUNTAINSIDE



RYAN MULLANEY AND
LYLE NORDSTROM, DIRECTORS

2026-2027 Series
Tales from the Baroque

Esther: Handel's First Oratorio



This concert has been underwritten by Clint and Linda Bradley with appreciation and gratitude for all the hard work of the Mountainside Baroque performers and leadership, supporters, volunteers, and the community who have made this our home. Thank you, Linda and Clint

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026
7:30pm | PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AT GARRETT COLLEGE
687 Mosser Rd | McHenry, Maryland

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026
4pm | TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
15 Randolph Ave | Hagerstown, Maryland

ESTHER

An Oratorio by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Performed by Mountainside Baroque

Lyle Nordstrom, Conductor

Sarah Fleiss - Esther (Queen of Persia)

Steven Soph - Ahasuerus (King of Persia)

Corbin Phillips - Haman (Chief Favorite of the King)

Nate Hodgson - Mordecai (a Jewish uncle of Esther) & Habdonah (an Attendant)

Aaron Cates - An Israelite

Julie Bosworth - An Israelite

Nathan Medley - An Israelite, Priest, and Officer

The Story

Handel's oratorio Esther begins in the middle of a larger story. To set the scene: during the time of the Babylonian Captivity, (the exile of a large number of Israelites to Babylon), the Babylonian king, Ahasuerus, gave a large banquet partly to show off his beautiful queen, Vasti, who unfortunately refuses to come. This throws the king into a rage, leading him to dismiss and divorce her. In need of a new queen, the king searched the kingdom, finding in the process the beautiful Esther. Ahasuerus was drawn to her and decided to make her queen. Esther's uncle, Mordecai, a Jewish community leader, advises her to conceal her Jewish background. Mordecai also discovers that the king's advisor, Haman, has a plan to assassinate the King.

OVERTURE

Andante

Larghetto

Allegro

ACT I

Scene 1

In an inciting incident, Mordecai refuses to bow to the powerful Haman, feeling he should only bow to his God. Haman, becoming enraged, convinces the king to issue a decree to kill all Jews. It is at this point that the oratorio picks up the story line, with Hamon proposing to "pluck and root out all and kill the Jews." The Babylonians agree, saying "Why should we be afraid of the Jewish God?"

RECITATIVE: Habdonah and Hamon

Habdonah: *'Tis greater far to spare, than to destroy.*

Haman: *I'll hear no more; it is decreed all the Jewish race shall bleed.*

AIR: Haman

Pluck root and branch from out the land. Shall I the God of Israel fear??

RECITATIVE: Officer

Our souls with ardor glow, to execute the blow.

CHORUS:

Shall we the God of Israel fear? Nor age nor sex we'll spare.

Scene 2

Scene two of Act I begins with the Jewish tribes singing a cheerful set of musical numbers ("Tune your harps" and "Praise the Lord"). They all too soon become aware of the King's decree ("Haman hath sent forth his decree to kill all Jews"), and sing a lament ("What have we done to deserve this. Have our sins provok'd the Lord?"), yearning for their homeland ("Ye sons of Israel, mourn, Ye never to your country shall return"). The Israelite priest reflects this sentiment in his aria "O Jordan, Jordan, sacred tide! Shall not thy hills resound with praise, and learn our holy song?"

RECITATIVE: An Israelite

Now persecution shall lay by her iron rod. Esther is Queen and Esther serves the living God.

AIR: An Israelite

Tune your harps to cheerful strains, Moulder Idols into dust.

CHORUS:

Shall we of servitude complain, the heavy yoke and galling chain.

RECITATIVE: An Israelite

O God, who from the suckling ordained early praise of such as worship thee in truth.

AIR: An Israelite

Praise the Lord with cheerful noise. Zion now her head shall raise.

CHORUS (Recap):

Shall we of servitude complain.

AIR: An Israelite

Sing songs of praise, bow down the knee.

RECITATIVE: Priest of the Israelites

How have our sins provok'd the Lord! Wild persecutions hath unsheath'd the sword.

CHORUS:

Ye sons of Israel mourn, ye never to your country shall return.

AIR: Priest of the Israelites

O Jordan, Jordan, sacred tide, shall we no more behold they glide the fertile vales along.

CHORUS (Recap):

Ye sons of Israel mourn, ye never to your country shall return

ACT TWO

At a key moment in Act II, Esther, is advised of the King's decree and rises to the challenge, risking her life for the salvation of her people. She is encouraged by her uncle Mordecai, who sings "Dread not, righteous Queen." Concerned that anyone who enters the king's presence

unbidden is to be put to death, regardless of status ("Who goes unsummon'd, by the laws shall die."), she sets on her plan ("I go before the King" and "Tears assist me"). The Israelites urge her on ("Save us, O Lord!").

Scene 3

RECITATIVE: Esther and Mordicai

Esther: *Why sits that sorrow on thy brow? Why is thy rev'rend head with mournful ashes spread.*

Mordecai: *One fate involves us all, Haman's decree to strike at me, hath said that ev'ry Jew shall fall.*

AIR: Mordecai

Dread not, righteous Queen, the danger., Love will pacify his anger.

RECITATIVE: Esther

I go before the King to stand. Stretch forth, O King, thy scepter'd hand!

AIR: Esther

Tears assist me, pity moving justice cruel, fraud reproving. Hear O God! Thy servant's pray'r.

CHORUS:

Save us, O Lord, and blunt the wrathful sword.

INTERMISSION

Scene 4

Fortunately, Ahasuerus extends his scepter to his queen, thus allowing her access without harm, while expressing his deepest love towards her. The marriage cemented, Esther reveals to the King that the decree will result in her death, hoping to lead him to rescind the order. The Israelites extol the attributes that will allow her to persuade the King ("Virtue, truth and innocence shall be her sure defense.") She invites the King, Mordecai and Haman to her apartment to hear more of the story.

RECITATIVE: Ahasuerus

Who dares intrude into our presence without our leave? It is decreed, he dies for this audacious deed.

DUET: Esther and Ahasuerus

Esther: *Who calls my parting soul from death?*

Ahasuerus: *Awake, my soul, my life, my breath!*

AIR: Ahasuerus

O beauteous Queen, unclothe those eyes! My fairest shall not bleed.

RECITATIVE: Esther

If I find favor in thy sight. May the great monarch of the East honor my feast.

AIR: Ahasuerus

How can I stay, when love invites? I come my Queen to chaste delights.

RECITATIVE: Two Israelites

1st Israelite: *With inward joy his visage glows, he to the Queen's apartment goes.*

2nd Israelite: *Beauty has his fury charm'd and all his wrath disarm'd.*

CHORUS: *Virtue, truth, and innocence shall ever be her sure defense.*

ACT THREE

Scene V

The chorus anticipates the King realizing the glory of Jehovah "crown'd with glory bright," who will come to "end our woes and pour his vengeance on our foes."

AIR: An Israelite

Jehovah crown'd with glory bright, surrounded with eternal light.

CHORUS:

He comes, He comes to end our woes and pour his vengeance on our foes.

Earth trembles, lofty mountains nod. Jacob arise to meet thy God.

Scene VI

At the meeting in Esther's apartment, Mordecai discloses Haman's assassination plot to Ahasuerus. In response, the king reverses the decree, stating that Haman "shall never more behold the golden ray." Haman pleads that the Queen not "turn thy face away" and have pity; Esther responds with an angry aria, vowing never more to listen to his cruel words. Ahasuerus bids him taken away to death and be paraded through the streets led by Mordecai, "Who saved the King."

RECITATIVE: Ahasuerus and Esther

Ahasuerus: *Now, O Queen, thy suit declare; ask half my Empire, and 'tis thine.*

Esther: *O gracious King, my people spare, for in their lives you strike at mine.*

ACCOMPAGNATO: Haman

Turn not, O Queen, thy face away, behold me prostrate on the ground, let mercy in thy sight be found.

AIR: Esther

Flatt'ring tongue, no more I hear thee! Vain are all thy cruel viles. Bloody wretch no more I fear thee.

RECITATIVE: Ahasuerus

Guards, seize the traitor, bear him hence! Death shall reward thy dire offence. To Mordecai be honor paid.

AIR: Haman

How art thou fall'n from thy height! Tremble, ambition, at the sight! In pow'r let mercy sway.

CHORUS:

The Lord our enemy has slain, ye sons of Jacob, sing a cheerful strain! Sing songs of praise, bow down the knee, the worship of our God is free. Forever blessed be thy holy name.

Finis

THE ODYSSEY OF GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

George Frideric Handel, an early musical prodigy, was born in Halle in modern-day Germany in 1685. According to an apocryphal tale, Handel's father was "alarmed" by his son's very early propensity for music. He "took every measure to oppose it," including forbidding any musical instrument in the house and preventing Handel from going to any house where they might be found. George, however, "found means to get a little clavichord brought to a room at the top of the house to which he constantly stole while the family slept."

Whatever the tale's veracity, and despite his wish that Handel study law, his father did do the right thing in the end. On a trip to Wiessenfels when the boy was around nine, his father allowed George to play the palace chapel organ. Fortuitously, the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels overheard his performance. Noting the youth of the performer, the Duke recommended that the young Handel be given musical instruction by the organist and composer Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow. This, of course, proved a pivotal moment in Handel's career.

Zachow introduced Handel to his vast collection of German and Italian music, both sacred and profane, including vocal and instrumental compositions of different schools and different styles. Under Zachow's supervision, Handel continued practice on the harpsichord. At the same time, he became proficient on violin, organ, and oboe, the last becoming his favorite. Zachow furthered Handel's education by twice taking him to Berlin, where he met Giovanni Bononcini, Attilio Ariosti and other well-known composers.

Around that time, Handel made the acquaintance of Telemann, who was studying law in Leipzig while also assisting Johann Kuhnau (Bach's predecessor at the Thomaskirche there). As Telemann recalled forty years later in an autobiography, "The writing of the excellent Johann Kuhnau served as a model for me in fugue and counterpoint; but in fashioning melodic movements and examining them, Handel and I were constantly occupied, frequently visiting each other as well as writing letters."

After working for a year as an organist at the Calvinist Cathedral in Halle, Handel accepted a position as violinist and harpsichordist in the orchestra of the Hamburg Oper am Gänsemarkt. There he met composers Johann Mattheson, Christoph Graupner and Reinhard Keiser. This famous foursome remained friends for life. In Hamburg Handel also discovered the wonders of Italian opera, then very much in fashion. Focusing on that genre, he soon composed his first two operas, *Almira* and *Nero*. Both were produced in Hamburg in 1705. Three years later, two other Handel operas, *Daphne* and *Florindo*, were performed also in Hamburg.

Handel traveled to Florence in 1706 at the invitation of Ferdinando de' Medici. De' Medici had a keen interest in opera and was trying to make Florence a music capital by attracting the leading talents of the day. However, the pull of Rome held sway, and Handel soon left for the "Eternal City." Opera was (temporarily) banned in the Papal States, so his compositions needed to be centered on the sacred music for the Roman clergy. (A famous example is his *Dixit Dominus*, performed by MBQ in 2024).

For other patrons he composed cantatas in pastoral style. Two oratorios, *La resurrezione* and *Il trionfo del tempo*, were produced in a private setting for Prince Ruspoli and Cardinal Ottoboni in 1709 and 1710, respectively. But the appeal of opera was still strong, and in 1707 he composed his first all-Italian opera, *Rodrigo*, produced at Il Teatro del Cocomero in Florence. In 1709 he followed with *Agrippina*, performed at Teatro San Giovanni Grisostomo in Venice. The Venice performance had a great run of 27 nights. Struck by the grandeur of Handel's style, the audience applauded vigorously for "Il caro Sassone" ("the dear Saxon" — referring to Handel's Halle origins).

In June 1710, Handel became Kapellmeister to George, the Elector of Hanover, who in a happy coincidence inherited the British throne a few years later. After two years, Handel decided to settle permanently in England. An annual income of £200 was awarded him in recognition of his composition, *Utrecht Te Deum* and *Jubilate*

HANDEL'S ODYSSEY (con't)

(celebrating the Treaty of Utrecht) that was dedicated to Queen Anne. First performed in 1713, his famous *Water Music* was presented at least three times for King George I. The musicians and the King and his guests floated on barges, accompanied by many boats that covered the River Thames.

Handel was appointed House Composer in 1717 at the Cannons estate in Middlesex, owned by the 1st Duke of Chandos, James Brydges. The duke was known as "Apollo of the Arts" for his ardent support of music and the arts. While in service there, Handel composed the *Chandos Anthems* and another work, a pastoral opera titled *Acis and Galatea* (performed by MBQ in 2015). That work would eventually become one of his most performed, including in the present day.

In 1718 Handel began composing the first versions of today's oratorio, *Esther*. The initial version was in six scenes with no break and written for an ensemble of one soprano, an alto, two tenors and two basses. Like *Acis and Galatea*, *Esther* may have been staged or semi-staged with

the soloists singing together to create a chorus when required. In a 1720 performance at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, it was performed by boys of the Chapel Royal. Most likely, it was staged with costumes and scenery. The libretto, written by Jean Racine, follows a somewhat incomplete version of the Biblical story of Esther. (A plot narrative is provided in the program.) In 1732 Handel successfully revived it in London, adding several movements and instruments. The result was a long work but a more complete story.

With the founding of the Royal Academy of Music in 1719, Handel dedicated himself to Italian opera, composing at least fifteen of them. But London's interest in the genre would wane, and the academy and other opera companies went broke in 1727. At this point, fueled by the success of the new version of *Esther*, Handel turned his efforts to the oratorio form. In 1741, *Messiah* premiered in Dublin, followed by several more oratorios for London stages, especially Covent Garden. Although opera was in his heart, oratorio became Handel's claim to fame.

Lyle & Pat Nordstrom

THE PERFORMERS

The Mountainside Baroque Orchestra

Dr. Lyle Nordstrom, director

Baroque Violin 1: Maria Romero, Jeremy Rhizor, Amelia Sie, Eliana Estrada

Baroque Violin 2: Janelle Davis, Caitlin Cribbs, Keats Diffenbach

Baroque Viola: Dan McCarthy

Baroque Violoncello: Arnie Tanimoto

Violone: Marilyn Fung

Baroque Oboe: Sung Lee

Natural Horn: Rachel Niketopoulos, Christopher Caudill

Organ: Marc Bellassai

Harp: Paula Fagerberg

Baroque Trumpet: Nick Harvey

The Scholars of St. Cecilia

Dr. Ryan Mullaney, director

Dr. Lyle Nordstrom, assistant director

Mark Steiner, rehearsal accompanist

Soprano: Alison Arthurs, Jill Chihak, Shelly Dilks, Katelyn Hendrix, Brielle Windle

Alto: Ava Bear, Robin Czifra, Edie Elvee, Jane Rossi, Mack Taylor, Scott Rieker

Tenor 1: Kevin Abernethy, Noah Briedle, Martha Macgill, Tammy Rankin

Tenor 2: Jeff Dilks, Gabe Hicks, David Rankin

Bass: Cameron Hughes, Sabrina Pade, Don Robinson, Bryan Smyth, Jon Schadt, Jason Steed

ABOUT TODAY'S FEATURED SOLOISTS

JULIE BOSWORTH, soprano

With a voice like “a long, unbroken beam of light” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*), soprano Julie Bosworth has captivated audiences from coast to coast. From medieval music to world premieres, she finds purpose in collaborating with artists across a vast array of musical genres. Equally at home as a concert soloist, on the operatic stage, or in an ensemble, Julie has sung with American Bach Soloists, Washington Bach Consort, Tempesta di Mare, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, In Series Opera, Staunton Music Festival, Mountainside Baroque, Early Music Access Project, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, True Concord Voices and Orchestra, Apollo's Fire, The Broken Consort, Seraphic Fire, Academy of Sacred Drama, The Thirteen, Kinnara, Hesperus, Raylynmor Opera, Les Canards Chantants, the 21st Century Consort, The Raleigh Camerata, Pitch Craft Collective, and The New Consort. Julie can be heard on “Isle of Majesty”, an album of original works by Emily Lau, and numerous recordings with The Thirteen, Grammy-nominated True Concord Voices and Orchestra, and The Choir of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. She resides in Washington D.C. with her husband, baritone Corbin Phillips, and their dog, Penny.

AARON CATES, tenor

Aaron Cates enjoys pursuing performance opportunities both as a featured soloist and professional choral ensemble member. He is especially passionate about collaborative ensemble singing, and has recently appeared with groups including The Thirteen, Washington Bach Consort, Transept, Spoleto Festival USA Chorus, Seraphic Fire, and Duke Chapel. Aaron has received vocal fellowships for his participation in the Charlotte Bach Akademie, the Illinois Bach Academy, the Voces8 US Scholars Program, the Quintessence Summer Choral Festival, and the Baylor International Choral Conducting Masterclass & Young Artist Program. Aaron holds music degrees in Vocal Performance from the University of South Carolina and Baylor University. Aaron is a native of Charleston, SC, and currently resides in the greater Washington DC area, where he serves as a staff singer for the Washington National Cathedral Choir.

SARAH FLEISS, soprano

Described as “bright” and “stylish” by *Opera News*, American soprano Sarah Fleiss is a laureate of the 12th edition of Le Jardin des Voix with Les Arts

Florissants where she toured internationally as La Poésie in *Les Arts Florissants* and Proserpine in *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* with William Christie. This season, she sings the Beethoven *Mass in C* with the Binghamton Symphony, Handel's *Messiah* with the Wichita Symphony, Mozart's *Exsultate, Jubilate* with the Sarasota Orchestra, and makes exciting debuts with Opera Philadelphia and Opera Lafayette. She recently debuted at the Monteverdi Festival in Cremona, Italy singing La Fortuna and Damigella in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* in a new production conducted by Paul Agnew and sang in both the Les Arts Florissants Festival de Printemps and the summer Festival Dans les Jardins des William Christie. Notable operatic roles include Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the Vixen in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* and Ginevra in Handel's *Ariodante*. Concert highlights include the *Fauré Requiem*, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, the Dvořák *Te Deum*, and Poulenc's *Gloria*. She is the recipient of the 2026 Rising Star Award from the Emerging Artists Foundation, the 2026 Career Advancement Award from the Musical Fund Society and the 2025 Arthur W. Foote Award from the Harvard Musical Association. Sarah studied at the Curtis Institute of Music, Columbia University, and the Juilliard School, and received additional training at the Verbier Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, and the Georg Solti Accademia. She is co-founder of Split the Lark, a singer-led Baroque ensemble.

NATHAN HODGSON, tenor

Nathan Hodgson is a New York-based tenor specializing in early music, chamber music, and choral singing. He is on the permanent roster in the Schola Cantorum at The Church of Saint Vincent Ferrer in New York City and performs with ensembles across the nation. Recent performances and recordings include *Akathist* with Artefact Ensemble and the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, Grammy-nominated album *Clear Voices in the Dark* with Skylark Vocal Ensemble, and Handel's *Solomon* on tour with the Clarion Choir and The English Concert. A native of Dallas-Fort Worth, Nathan sang regularly with professional ensembles in the Dallas area before moving to New York City in 2015.

NATHAN MEDLEY, countertenor

Nathan has emerged in recent years as one of the leading younger-generation countertenors, with notable success internationally in concert and opera. Recent highlights include debuts with The Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle; St. Cecilia

Orchestra; National Symphony Orchestra; San Francisco Symphony; London Symphony; Carnegie Hall; Los Angeles Philharmonic; English National Opera; Barbican, London; The Lucerne Festival; St. Louis Symphony; Pacific Musicworks; Miami Bach Society; Opera Omaha; and the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. In May 2012 he made his professional debut premiering John Adam's *Gospel According to the Other Mary* which he has subsequently recorded with both the LA Phil and Berlin Philharmonic. He can also be heard on the Boston Early Music Festival's *St. Matthew Passion* by Johann Sebastiani. He performs throughout the U.S. with his early music ensemble, Echoing Air, and his Lute Duo collaborator, Brandon Acker. Mr. Medley has worked with Peter Sellars, Catherine Turocy, Gilbert Blin, Ellen Hargis, Gustavo Dudamel, David Robertson, John Harbison, James Darrah, Markus Stenz, John Adams, Stephen Stubbs, and Webb Wiggins since graduating from Oberlin Conservatory. In May 2016 he premiered a new song cycle by John Harbison for countertenor and gamba consort in Chicago with Second City Musick. He is a founding member of Echoing Air, an ensemble focused on music of the Baroque and modern eras composed for countertenor.

CORBIN PHILLIPS, bass

Labeled a "standout baritone" by the *SF Gate*, Corbin Phillips is a Washington D.C. based singer who specializes in the Baroque vocal repertoire. His most recent appearances have included Handel's *Dublin*

Messiah with Tempesta di Mare, and Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Mass for the Endangered* with Gallicantus. Additionally, he has performed with The Thirteen, Opera Lafayette, Mountainside Baroque, and the Peabody Consort. When not singing, Corbin enjoys spending time as an amateur photographer and organist. He holds a master's degree in Early Music from the Peabody Conservatory where he studied with baritone William Sharp.

STEVEN SOPH, tenor

Praised by *The Washington Post* as a "superb vocal soloist" and *The New York Times* for his "impressive clarity and color," tenor Steven Soph appears with orchestras and early-music ensembles across the United States, including The Cleveland Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Handel and Haydn Society, American Bach Soloists, and Apollo's Fire. Particularly associated with the music of J. S. Bach, Soph has performed as a soloist under Franz Welser-Möst, Jos van Veldhoven, Jonathan Cohen, John Butt, Ruben Valenzuela, and Patrick Dupré Quigley. He appears at the Oregon, Carmel, San Francisco, Saint Louis, Baldwin Wallace, Charlotte, Victoria, and Winter Park Bach Festivals. Soph can be heard on Grammy-nominated recordings with Conspirare and True Concord Voices & Orchestra and on Maná's Latin Grammy award-winning *Cama Incendiada*. He is a graduate of Yale's School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music and the University of North Texas.

ABOUT MOUNTAINSIDE BAROQUE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

RYAN MULLANEY

Artistic Co-director Dr. Ryan Mullaney has made a name for himself in music circles across the country. Ryan has been appointed Assistant Professor of Fine Arts and Director of Choral Studies at DeSales University in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania. Mullaney spent four years as Director of Liturgical Music at Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Parish in Cumberland, MD. Prior to this post in Cumberland, Ryan enjoyed a five-year tenure on the music staff at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore, MD, serving as an assistant choirmaster, cantor, and section leader in the Cathedral Choir. Mullaney has served on the board of the Allegany Arts Council, Queen City Performing Arts Development, and the Liturgical Music Commission for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He holds the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Washington.

LYLE NORDSTROM

Artistic Co-Director, lutenist and conductor Dr. Lyle Nordstrom, has been a strong influence in the early music field for the past several decades. He has led the early music programs at Oakland, Clayton State College and University and the University of North Texas. In 2000 he was given the Thomas Binkley Award by Early Music America for his work on the collegiate level. Nordstrom was also chosen to receive the prestigious Howard Mayer Brown Award for lifetime achievement in the field of early music. He is co-founder of The Musicians of Swanee Alley, a group he directed with lutenist Paul O'Dette from 1976 to 1996, performing with them at nearly every major early music festival in North America and Europe. In 1997, Lyle also founded the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra and is now the Director Emeritus. A DMA graduate of Stanford University, he is known for his scholarly contributions to various early music journals as well as a book on the wire-strung bandora and articles in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians*.

ABOUT MOUNTAINSIDE BAROQUE

Now in its fifteenth season of live concerts, Mountainside Baroque, Cumberland's early music collective, has firmly established itself as a staple of the cultural scene in the Mid-Atlantic region, providing top-notch performances of early repertoire on period and reproduction instruments.

Established in 2011 by co-directors Ryan Mullaney and Lyle Nordstrom, Mountainside Baroque performances feature some of the finest professional musicians and specialists from across the country, coming together in Cumberland for camaraderie, a love of the music, and the beauty of the region. Performances have taken place in Allegany County, Maryland, in churches and institutions that have links to the rich heritage of the region. For the 2026-2027 season, we have expanded to venues in Garrett and Washington Counties.

Beyond performances and other public events, education has had important underpinnings in our outreach efforts. The organization has offered the Mountainside Baroque Summer Academy, a week-long workshop designed for middle school, high school and early college student musicians that drew from the local and regional area. Mountainside Baroque also worked to support the strings programs in the Allegany Public Schools, by bringing in professional performers to work with the orchestral students to help them improve their technique and achieve greater success in performance. These various activities, along with college student

scholarships, including those at Frostburg State University, demonstrate the premium placed on the local sense of community and collaboration. This season we have been pleased to bring period music to the annual Cumberland Heritage Days Festival with *Les Inégales* and the *Chivalrous Crickets*.

In addition, over time, the organization has expanded its reach throughout a broad region, attracting new patrons from the surrounding metropolitan areas and establishing a nationwide reputation, as evidenced by a 2018 feature article in *Early Music America Magazine*. The response to our 2018 festival was overwhelmingly enthusiastic, showing that Cumberland, with its combination of walkability, interesting venues and historical interest, is the "perfect" place for visiting patrons. (The beautifully renovated downtown area has only enhanced these qualities.)

Use our online box office, which provides not only convenience but a FlexSaver punch card option, or buy tickets at the door on the day of the concert.

Various video and audio clips of live performances are available via our website, or go to our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@mountainsidebaroque4336>) for performance excerpts. "Like" Mountainside Baroque on Facebook, and follow us on Instagram.



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- Shelly and Jeff Dilks for coordinating with the Allegany County Historical Society, the C. William Gilchrist Museum, Emmanuel Episcopal Parish, and the Allegany Museum to facilitate our successful participation in *Heritage Days 2026*. Also, Rev. Matthew Riegel, Brennan Ballas, Jim Ballas, Jon Schadt, Lyle & Pat Nordstrom for additional help
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- Clint Bradley, Rev. Matthew Riegel, Debbie Streicher and Pat Nordstrom for handling logistics for the Hagerstown performance at Trinity Lutheran Church

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Program, Media & Publicity: Pat Nordstrom | Video: Neil Stylinski, Jeff Dilks

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Cindy Thompson
John and Janet Wunderlick

DONATING TO MOUNTAINSIDE BAROQUE

Beyond income from ticket sales, Mountainside Baroque relies on financial support received through grants, contributions from businesses, and, especially, donations from individuals and families. It is only through your generosity that we are able to bring in top-quality performers from throughout the nation while maintaining affordable ticket prices. Donations can be made to *sponsor a concert*, in part (\$1000), *sponsor an artist* (\$600), *support artist travel* (\$250+), or *contribute to support other expenses*. Patrons may also choose to support the organization through IRA distributions, stock transfers, or bequests. We have recently begun to offer an additional donation option with the establishment of the Mountainside Baroque Inc Fund at the Community Trust Foundation, via one time or recurring donations. You may donate online, or by sending a check made to "Mountainside Baroque" to PO Box 3143, LaVale MD 21504. (Indicate which fund on the memo line.) Whether through regular attendance at our concerts, a financial contribution, or a note of appreciation, your steadfast support is greatly appreciated!



Allegany Arts Council
A COMMUNITY ALIVE WITH THE ARTS!



2026-2027 SEASsON: *Tales from the Baroque*

Tales from the Baroque



MOUNTAINSIDE Baroque | **15** Years **2026-2027 SEASON**

ESTHER
George Frideric Handel's First Oratorio
Saturday, September 26, 2026 | 7:30pm
Performing Arts Ctr., Garrett College, McHenry, MD
Sunday, September 27, 2026 | 4pm
Trinity Lutheran Church, Hagerstown, MD
Come with us to follow the inspiring Biblical story of Esther, in Handel's genius combination of orchestra, solos and choir.



BACH'S COFFEEHOUSE
Café Zimmermann
Sunday, Nov. 8, 2026, 4pm & 7pm
Café Mark, Cumberland, MD
Leipzig's famous coffee house promoted concerts by Bach and Telemann, featuring music by all the Baroque great composers. Enjoy your coffee and more listening to great music.



A FESTIVAL OF LESSONS & CAROLS
Sunday, December 20, 2026 | 5pm
Emmanuel Episcopal Parish, Cumberland, MD
Follow the Christmas story with carols, lessons and anthems.
Annual Favorite!



Johann Sebastian Bach's
ST. JOHN PASSION
Sunday, March 14, 2027 | 4pm
Pealer Recital Hall FSU Performing Arts Center, Frostburg, MD
St. John's Passion, depicting the events of Good Friday, contains some of the most beautiful melodies, and powerful choral moments found in Bach's music.



REMEMBERING STANLEY RITCHIE

Mountainside Baroque would like to mark the passing of Stanley Ritchie, the “dean” of Baroque violin in North America, who died this month at the age of 90. Stanley brought his considerable talent to the MBQ stage several times, and was mentor to many of the string players who regularly appear in our concerts. He is pictured here at the Shrine of Ss. Peter and Paul and St. Paul's Lutheran Church with Cynthia Roberts and Brandi Berry Benson.

