

## Daniel Abraham, conductor & musicologist

has led choral, orchestral, and musical theater ensembles in the Boston, Washington, and Toronto areas. *The Washington Post* has praised his performances as having “uncommon precision and exuberant vitality,” being “bright, energetic, and lovingly shaped” and showing “keen insight and coherence.” The late critic Joseph McLellan once remarked that as a conductor and musicologist “Abraham blends those skills marvelously in programs that combine learning with enjoyment in ideal proportions.” A specialist in performance and practices of eighteenth-century music, his work with period-instrument ensemble The Bach Sinfonia is consistently recognized for its excellence in programming and innovative educational approach. Dedicated to performance, scholarship, and education, Abraham is co-chair of the Department of Performing Arts, Associate Professor of Music, and Director of Choral Activities at American University where he conducts the American University Chorus, the American University Chamber Singers, and teaches courses in music history, music theory, and music appreciation courses ranging from *The Music of Bach, Handel & the Late Baroque* to *A History of Rock-n-Roll*.



A frequent clinician, adjudicator, and festival jurist, he has led various festival ensembles, clinics, and master classes in Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and Ontario, Canada. During the spring of 2005, he was Visiting Distinguished Professor of the Arts in Cairo, Egypt where he rehearsed and conducted performances of a chamber chorus formed jointly by AUC students, students of the Cairo Conservatoire of Music, members of the Cairo Opera House, and other civic choirs. While in Cairo, Abraham provided lectures, directed master classes, and led clinics for various Egyptian professional and civic music organizations, which included a master class on baroque performance practice at the Cairo Conservatoire, the first of its kind held in the country.

Abraham holds both a Masters degrees in Choral Conducting as well as Musicology from the University of Maryland. He was a conducting fellow at the 1997 Oregon Bach Festival where he worked and studied with the renowned Bach interpreter Helmuth Rilling, principally studied choral and orchestral conducting with Paul Traver (University of Maryland), Harold McSwain, and Christopher McGahan (University of Massachusetts), and received additional training with William Weinert (Eastman School of Music), and David Hoose (Boston University). His musicological studies were under the guidance of the late Howard Serwer and John Ogasapian, as well as Richard G. King, E. Eugene Helm, Rachel Wade, and Richard Wexler. Prior to his appointment at American University, he was a faculty member at The George Washington University and was previously the Director of the University of Maryland's Collegium Musicum.

He has conducted performances at the Kennedy Center, the Concert Hall of the Music Center at Strathmore, The National Women's Museum of the Arts, and twice before National Meetings of the American Musicological Society. Broadcast credits include choral preparation for the *Kennedy Center Honors Gala* (PBS), chorus master for the national broadcast of *Christmas in Washington* (TNT) as well as an appearance on the nationally syndicated PBS series *History Detectives* during its initial season. He has conducted modern premieres of various eighteenth-century works including the Washington area premiere of George Frideric Handel's *Gloria*, the first modern performance of the 1776 French comic opera *Fleur d'Epine* by Marie Emmanuelle Bayon-Louis, and the modern premiere of Franz Biber's *Stabat mater*, the first complete performance in North American of the J. S. Bach's *Alles mit Gott und nichts mit ohn' ihn*, BWV 1127 which was presented at the 2005 Annual National Meeting of the American Musicological Society. His performances have been Nationally Broadcast on NPR's *Performance Today* and his recording with The Bach Sinfonia and Handel Choir of Baltimore of Handel's *Alexander's Feast* and Bach's *Alles mit Gott und nichts ohn' ihn*, BWV 1127—the first commercial recording of either work by an American conductor—received high praise from various reviewers. His next compact disc *The Forgotten Baroque*, feature the premiere recording of the Biber *Stabat Mater*, psalms by Rossi and Carissimi's *Jephte* is scheduled for release on Dorian Records in May 2009.

As a scholar, he has worked for *The Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach Edition* (Oxford University Press), has edited music for Cambridge University Press, and is currently editing an eighteenth-century opera for A-R Editions. He has published in *Choral Journal* and was recipient of the Lowens Award for excellence in musicological research and a recipient of the Daniel Pomeroy Prize given by the American Handel Society for Performance and Scholarship in eighteenth-century music.

Abraham has served various professional organizations including his work as grant panelist for the Maryland State Arts Council. For the American Choral Director Association he has served as the Chair of Repertoire and Standards for Colleges and Universities for the Maryland and the District of Columbia, was Chair of the 2006 and 2008 Eastern American Choral Director Association Collegiate Honor Choir, Interest Session Program Chair and a member of the executive planning committee for ACDA Eastern Division. He has also served as a capital chapter representative to the National Council of the American Musicological Society. Abraham is president of the Maryland/District of Columbia State Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association.

## ***What the press is saying . . .***

### From the *Choral Journal*

[Review of Dorian Records Compact Disc (Handel: *Alexander's Feast* & Bach: *Alles mit Gott*). *Choral Journal* (September 2007)]:

"Most choral aficionados, when purchasing a recording of a distinctly British Baroque choral work, immediately seek out English heavy-hitters like John Eliot Gardiner, who can provide clean traditional-instrument accompaniment, delightfully "precious" British diction, and virtuoso performers. However, Daniel Abraham's recording of *Alexander's Feast* suggests that ensembles on this side of the Atlantic can also produce a more than respectable performance of this repertoire."

"The most apt adjective for this ensemble is "consistent," as it tears through thirty-one varied movements . . . ."

"Daniel Abraham has memorialized an interpretation of Handel's *Alexander's Feast* that can proudly pose in the CD racks along with the bigger names associated with English Baroque music."

### From *The Washington Post*

"Sinfonia conductor Abraham paced things very well, not dwelling on extremes of tempo but not shying away from them either."

— Joan Reinthaler, *The Washington Post*

"bright, energetic and lovingly shaped performances"

— Joseph McLelland, *The Washington Post*

"uncommon precision and exuberant vitality"

"melded baroque scholarship with acutely expressive musicianship".

"beautifully integrated playing . . . ."

— Ronald Broun, *The Washington Post*

"Abraham conducted with keen insight and coherence"

— Cecelia Porter, *The Washington Post*

*The Washington Post* has frequently cited Abraham's programming and concert presentations for their creativity, artistry, and educational content:

". . . thoughtfully balanced program."

— Anne Midgette, *The Washington Post*

"It was a different Vivaldi that the Bach Sinfonia and Chantry brought . . . voices of introspection and in a baroque romanticism that, at times, bordered on the mystical. . . . The program re-created what might have been a vespers service at the 'Pieta' in vivaldi's early 18th-century Venice."

— Joan Reinthaler, *The Washington Post*

"The Sinfonia has given the Washington area an enterprising decade of musical journeys back three centuries, re-creating baroque works in a way that also help listeners envision the world of musicmaking in marbled courts, gilded churches and gabled towns."

— Cecelia Porter, *The Washington Post*

"Abraham is a musicologist and conductor. He blended those skills marvelously in a program that combined learning with enjoyment in ideal proportions."

— Joseph McLelland, *The Washington Post*

"The symmetry with the program's beginning was a surprise delight . . . itself a sort of musical joke, almost a crab canon"

— Joseph McLelland, *The Washington Post*

"As is usual with the group, the program with chosen with refined taste and played with exemplary style and technique."

— Joseph McLelland, *The Washington Post*

*A complete professional and performance resume, additional press quotations and references available upon request.*