

NICHOLAS MCGEGAN
Principal Guest Conductor
Biography

As he embarks on his fourth decade on the podium, Nicholas McGegan — long hailed as “one of the finest baroque conductors of his generation” (London *Independent*) and “an expert in 18th-century style” (*The New Yorker*) — is recognized for his probing and revelatory explorations of music of all periods. In 2015, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra celebrates his 30th year as music director and he is also Principal Guest Conductor of the Pasadena Symphony.

McGegan has established the San Francisco-based Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Philharmonia Chorale as one of the world’s leading period-performance ensembles, with notable appearances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the London Proms, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and the International Handel Festival, Göttingen. PBO’s 2015/16 season sees the orchestra returning to Carnegie Hall for a performance of Scarlatti’s *La Gloria di primavera*, in addition to tours of the piece in California’s Bay Area and Quebec. As a guest conductor, McGegan’s 15/16 season features appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (with which he has appeared annually for nearly 20 years), St. Louis, Baltimore, BBC Scottish, RTÉ National, and New Zealand Symphonies; the Cleveland Orchestra/Blossom Music Festival; and the Orchestra of St. Luke’s at Caramoor and Carnegie Hall.

Throughout his career, McGegan has defined an approach to period style that sets the current standard: intelligent, infused with joy, and never dogmatic. Under his leadership Philharmonia Baroque continues to expand its repertoire into the Romantic Era and beyond. Calling the group’s recent recording of the Brahms *Serenades* “a truly treasurable disc,” James R. Oestreich in *The New York Times* made special note of the performance’s “energy and spirit.” The recording, said *Voix des Arts*, offers “evidence that ‘period’ instruments are in no way inhibited in terms of tonal amplitude and beauty. These are ... exceptionally beautifully played performances.”

McGegan’s ability to engage players and audiences alike has made him a pioneer in broadening the reach of historically informed practice beyond the world of period ensembles to conventional symphonic forces. His guest-conducting appearances with major orchestras — including the New York, Los Angeles, and Hong Kong Philharmonics; the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Toronto, Sydney, and New Zealand Symphonies; the Cleveland and the Philadelphia Orchestras; and the Royal Northern Sinfonia and Scottish Chamber Orchestra — often feature Baroque repertoire alongside Classical, Romantic, 20th-century and even brand-new works: Mendelssohn, Sibelius, Britten, Bach and Handel with the Utah Symphony; Poulenc and Mozart with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra; Mahler and Mozart with the Pasadena Symphony Orchestra; and the premiere of Stephen Hough’s *Missa Mirabilis* with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, paired with Haydn, Brahms and Mendelssohn. His position in Pasadena provides the opportunity to conduct a wider range of his favorite repertoire, including Dvořák, Britten, Elgar, Mahler, Brahms and Wagner.

Active in opera as well as the concert hall, McGegan was principal conductor of Sweden’s perfectly preserved 18th-century Drottningholm Theater from 1993 to 1996, Artistic Director and conductor at the Göttingen Handel Festival for 20 years (1991-2011), and Principal Guest Conductor at Scottish Opera in the 1990s. He has also been a frequent guest conductor, appearing at Covent Garden, San Francisco, Santa Fe, and Washington. Mr.

McGegan has enjoyed a long collaboration with groundbreaking choreographer Mark Morris, notably the premiere performances of Morris's production of Rameau's *Platée* at the Edinburgh Festival, Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, *L'Allegro* at Ravinia, the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York, and Cal Performances in Berkeley.

His discography of more than 100 releases includes the world premiere recording of Handel's *Susanna*, which garnered both a Gramophone Award and a GRAMMY® nomination, and recent issues of that composer's *Solomon*, *Samson* and *Acis and Galatea* (the little-known version adapted by Felix Mendelssohn). Under its own label, Philharmonia Baroque Productions (PBP), Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra has recently more than half a dozen acclaimed archival recordings in addition to the Brahms *Serenades*: Beethoven's Symphonies 4 and 7, Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été* and selected Handel arias with Lorraine Hunt Lieberson; Haydn Symphonies No. 88, 101 and 104, nominated for a GRAMMY® Award; Haydn Symphonies 57, 67, and 68; Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and other concerti with Elizabeth Blumenstock as violin soloist; Handel's *Atalanta* with soprano Dominique Labelle in the title role; and *Teseo* with Labelle singing the role of Medea. Scarlatti's *La Gloria di Primavera* is slated for release in early 2016. He also records regularly with Hungary's Capella Savaria, most recently discs of violin concerti of Haydn and Kraus, with discs of Schubert and Mozart on the horizon.

Mr. McGegan is committed to the next generation of musicians, frequently conducting and coaching students in residencies and engagements at Yale University, the Juilliard School, Harvard University, the Colburn School, Aspen Music Festival and School, Sarasota Music Festival, and the Music Academy of the West. In 2013 he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Music by the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and delivered the commencement address.

Born in England, Nicholas McGegan was educated at Cambridge and Oxford and taught at the Royal College of Music, London. He was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the Queen's Birthday Honours for 2010 "for services to music overseas." Most recently, he was invited to join the board of Early Music America. His awards also include the Halle Handel Prize; an honorary professorship at Georg-August University, Göttingen; the Order of Merit of the State of Lower Saxony (Germany); the Medal of Honour of the City of Göttingen, an honorary doctorate from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and an official Nicholas McGegan Day, declared by the Mayor of San Francisco in recognition of his distinguished work with Philharmonia Baroque.

Visit Nicholas McGegan on the web at www.nicholasmcgegan.com.