



# LA MONICA

## ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE

With each vibrant performance, La Monica has captured the affection of its audiences nationwide, receiving standing ovations at major music festivals. Its artful programming and dramatic flair have established this dynamic combination of solo voice and string ensemble at the forefront of the early music scene.

The New York Times praised La Monica as a group that “plays with zest and imagination, both on its own and in support of its fine singer, Phoebe Jevtovic Alexander.” Press acclaim for La Monica’s “uninhibited performance” and “superb ensemble playing” demonstrate qualities that have earned them an award from Early Music America and semifinalist status at the 2000 Concert Artists Guild Competition, no small feat for a historical performance ensemble.

La Monica presents refreshing recitals exploring the wealth of baroque music, from the theatrical to the lyrical, from the obscure to the celebrated. The ensemble has appeared as part of New York’s prestigious concert series, *Music Before 1800*, and has also been presented by the Getty Center, *Houston Early Music*, the *Pittsburgh Renaissance & Baroque Society*, *San Francisco Early Music Society*, and the early music festivals of Bloomington, Indianapolis, Amherst and Washington’s Whidbey Island.



# LA MONICA

## PRESS ACCLAIM

"The ensemble's irrepressible energy and pitch-perfect timing proved a winning combination."

– *San Francisco Classical Voice* November 2007

"At the 2000 Berkeley Festival, the final afternoon... they blew away everything else I had heard that week. The energy with which they dug into their music was more characteristic of a rock band than a chamber ensemble. And it was exactly right for the fiery, moody, emotionally expressive music. I can think of few more compelling arguments for the sheer excitement of early music than La Monica."

– *San Francisco Early Music Society News* May 2007

"Not only was the concert astutely constructed...but the technical authority and interpretative passion exhibited throughout demonstrated that here were musicians with both an understanding of their repertoire and of each other. A stimulating festival hit."

– *Bloomington Herald Times* May 2006

"Virtuoso violinists, Tekla Cunningham and Susan Feldman, the excellent cellist and violist da gamba William Skeen, and clear-toned and flexible soprano, Phoebe Alexander... won a fervent standing ovation."

– *Bloomington Herald Times* May 2006

"The group plays with zest and imagination, both on its own and in support of its fine singer."

– *The New York Times* November 2003

"Among the highlights in a week of outstanding events [at the Berkeley Early Music Festival was] a vitally-sung concert of music of Italian influence by La Monica with soprano Phoebe Jevtovic Alexander."

– *Early Music America* Fall 2002

"La Monica played at this concert with panache and a wonderful sureness of style... a zestful and uninhibited performance."

– *San Diego Weekly Reader* May 2002

"All the players (including terrific cellist, William Skeen) did their utmost and the result was sensational."

– *San Diego Weekly Reader* May 2002

"World class performances... La Monica absolutely owns this repertoire and plays it with an abundance of warmth, wit, and intelligence."

*KPFK FM, Los Angeles* June 2001

"Superb ensemble playing"

– *Chamber Music Newsletter from the South Bay* September 2001

"Phoebe Alexander was sweetly expressive"

– *Los Angeles Times* December 2000

"Of note was the fluid playing of violinists Susan Feldman and Ondine Young."

– *Los Angeles Times* June 2000



# LA MONICA

## CONCERT PROGRAMS



### The Amorous Lyre

La Monica embodies the passion, drama, and innovation of 17th century Italian music wherein the growth of opera brought new theatrical dimensions to vocal and instrumental music. Castello, Marini and Merula broke new compositional ground – creating music with poetry, melody, and harmony that were raw, fresh, and surprising. Quirky love songs, charming ground basses and virtuoso sonatas capture the vivid emotional expression of the early Baroque.



### Handel's Roman Holiday

Young Handel's first trip abroad brought him to the flourishing musical scene of Italy where he discovered the virtuoso violin music of Corelli and the lavish theater music of Scarlatti. From the high drama of Handel's Italian mini-operas to the pyrotechnics of Vivaldi's string music this program shows why Handel's youthful experimentation created music to which he would return throughout his life.



### Out of the Depths

Following the ruin of the Thirty Years War, there was a creative explosion in Germany, producing music characterized by cosmopolitan tastes and the flowing exchange of ideas over political boundaries. Many German musicians traveled to Italy and France to study with such masters as Monteverdi and Lully, and many foreign musicians were imported to German-speaking lands. The sheer beauty and depth of emotion of this music was the sound-world from which Bach would later emerge.