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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Apollo's Fire Announces 2008-09 Season

Apollo's Fire, the Cleveland Baroque Orchestra, proudly announces its 17th season under Music Director Jeannette Sorrell. Recognized as "one of America's leading Baroque orchestras" (THE BOSTON GLOBE), Apollo's Fire presents a six-concert subscription season performed in venues throughout Northeast Ohio. The 2008-09 season will also include three recording projects, a tour to Calgary, Alberta, concert broadcasts on radio and television and two CD releases.

Highlights of the 2008-09 season will include a staged production of Henry Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas* with Meredith Hall as Dido and Sumner Thomas as Aeneas. In December Handel's *Messiah*, revered as "the Messiah we've been waiting for" by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, will make its welcome return to the stage. Soloists from the acclaimed 2006 *Messiah* performance, including soprano Amanda Forsythe, mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Shammash, tenor Ian Honeyman, and baritone Jeffrey Strauss, will return this season to reprise their roles. In April the ensemble will perform *Earth, Wind & Fire: Rameau & Vivaldi do Battle with Nature* featuring baroque storm and tempest music. Dancers Carlos Fittante and Catherine Turocy and violinist David Greenberg will join Apollo's Fire for select performances in the Cleveland area and for the ensemble's two performances in Calgary, Alberta.

Apollo's Fire will make its PBS television debut in the spring of 2009 with a program of Vivaldi concertos recorded as a live studio concert in 2008 at WVIZ-PBS television in Cleveland. As well, the orchestra will be featured in a thirteen-week international radio broadcast series through the WCLV/Seaway syndication, slated to begin in January of 2009. Programs will be carried by selected classical music stations throughout North America and Europe.

Recording projects for CD release include Handel's *Coronation Anthems*, Handel's *Messiah* and *Earth, Wind & Fire*.

TWO GRANTS FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS: In June of 2009 Apollo's Fire will be presenting ***Come to the River: An Early American Gathering*** for its annual Countryside Concerts series. The program, conceived by Music Director Jeannette Sorrell, will explore the rich and neglected traditions of shape-note singing, New England barn dances, and the revival hymns of the late 18th-century tunesmiths. Apollo's Fire was recently selected as one of only two ensembles in the state of Ohio to receive an "American Masterpieces" grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (through the Ohio Arts Council) in support of its *Come to the River* program. These funds will allow the ensemble to present a greatly expanded program, including a recording project for CD release, a tour to festivals in the U.S. and Canada, and educational opportunities for local students including family concerts, workshops and a residency at Oberlin Conservatory's Baroque Performance Institute.

FAMILY & EDUCATIONAL CONCERTS: The 2008-09 season will present two Family Concerts titled "A Day at Vivaldi's Orphanage" and "Singing in the Rain". Family concerts are 45-minute programs for the young and young-at-heart (ages 6-96!) which feature highlights from the subscription concerts, instrument demonstrations and opportunities for audience participation.

New this year is an educational outreach partnership with Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio (YANEO). Apollo's Fire will present three educational concerts in November for middle-school students in Cleveland Heights, Fairlawn and Oberlin. Unlike many other school music programs, the unique partnership between Apollo's Fire and YANEO will bring children to church venues chosen for their acoustics, so that they experience the music in the type of acoustical setting for which it was intended.

Additionally, YANEO will assist in developing and distributing preparatory classroom materials for students introducing the music and the composers. The program will include lively demonstrations and explanations of the instruments and musical form, as well as "quizzes" and audience participation.

NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR:

Apollo's Fire welcomed Jacqueline Taylor to the new position of Managing Director in June of 2008. Ms. Taylor recently settled in Cleveland, having resided previously in New York City where she served as Executive Director of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for six years. Prior to that position, she served as Managing Director of the 92nd Street Y's renowned Tisch Center for the Arts. For a full news release on Ms. Taylor's new appointment with Apollo's Fire [click here](#).

NEWLY PLEDGED GRANT from the CLEVELAND CLINIC FOUNDATION:
For the first time in Apollo's Fire history, the nationally-renowned Cleveland Clinic has just pledged \$20,000 of support to form a partnership that will nurture AF's existing educational and outreach programming while expanding the reach of its offerings to new constituencies of high priority to the Clinic. Further news on the partnership will become available in the coming months.

The six subscription concerts of the 2008-09 season will be as follows:

A KING IS CROWNED: *Handel Salutes the Royal Family*

October 16-19, 2008

Kiera Duffy, soprano
Margaret Bragle, mezzo-soprano
Apollo's Singers

Drums and trumpet flourish, please! Apollo's Fire launches the season with the splendor of Handel's *Coronation Anthems*. The King of England could be crowned only with the most exuberant virtuosity of chorus, brass, timpani and orchestra. The occasion inspired Handel in the joyous spirit of his famous "Hallelujah Chorus." Program also includes instrumental concertos and suites.

"When Sorrell conducts Handel, the audience is the winner."
- PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Pluckfest II: *Old World Meets New*

November 12-16, 2008

Stephen Stubbs, guitar & guest director
Nell Snaidas, soprano
Maxine Eilander, Spanish harp

The Civilized and the Wild. When Spain and Italy met the New World, the culture clash resonated throughout Europe. Mediterranean composers found new inspiration in the exotic dances and sexy cross rhythms of South America, Africa and the Canary Islands. Harps, siren songs, Spanish guitar, plucky dances, sultry ballads and undulating percussion are the colors of this Mediterranean jam session led by renowned lutenist Stephen Stubbs.

"Nell Snaidas, a sexy Carmen-type, projected lyrics like a storyteller. She was a model of luminous timbre and emotional intensity." – THE PLAIN DEALER

HANDEL'S *MESSIAH*

December 9-14, 2008

Amanda Forsythe, soprano
Elizabeth Shammash, mezzo-soprano
Ian Honeyman, tenor
Jeffrey Strauss, baritone
Apollo's Singers

Hailed across the country as "the Messiah we've been waiting for" (PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE), this interpretation by Jeannette Sorrell has brought joy to thousands of listeners in national radio broadcasts. Sorrell and her colleagues bring Handel's music to life as the theatrical drama he intended. The four acclaimed soloists and "visionary storytellers" from 2006 return in this special performance recorded for live CD release.

"Choral clarity of this sort is almost unheard of today." – THE PLAIN DEALER

PURCELL'S *DIDO & AENEAS* (staged production)

January 29-February 3, 2009

Meredith Hall as Dido
Sumner Thompson as Aeneas
with
Carlos Fittante, dancer
Apollo's Singers
Apollo's Musettes

In honor of Purcell's 350th birthday, Apollo's Fire brings to life the celebrated gem of baroque opera. The tragic tale of Queen Dido of Carthage and her love for the Trojan hero Aeneas has moved and inspired audiences for centuries. Apollo's Fire's previous production of this masterpiece (1998) won highest praise from THE PLAIN DEALER:

"An exhilarating production... and a triumph, all around. Sorrell drew glowing colors from her crackerjack ensemble. Meredith Hall shaped Dido's lines with limpid beauty. She was Dido incarnate."

VIRTUOSO FIRE: *Italian Concertos by Vivaldi & Rivals*

March 5-8, 2009

Alex Klein, oboe

The magical city of Venice was home to several composers, all competing fiercely for attention - Vivaldi was violin star, and Albinoni was the diva of the oboe. Legendary Grammy-award winning oboist Alex Klein brings to life the fiery oboe concertos of both composers, while Apollo's Fire principal players join in the fray with double and triple concertos by other Italian colleagues and rivals.

EARTH, WIND & FIRE: *Vivaldi & Rameau Do Battle with Nature**

April 17-24, 2009, * Followed by a tour in Calgary, Alberta, April 26-27

David Greenberg, violin
Jeannette Sorrell, harpsichord

From tempests to earthquakes, Rameau and Vivaldi masterfully exploited the virtuosity of the orchestra to evoke the struggles of nature. Hold onto your hats as Apollo's Fire negotiates the earthquake and volcanic eruption scene from Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*. Rameau's colleague Rebel left us an extraordinary depiction of creation, *Les Elémens*. Some tempests from Vivaldi round out this evening of turbulent orchestral showpieces.

Subscription packages for the 2008-2009 season are available from \$117-\$306; single tickets for subscription concerts are sold for \$20-60 and single tickets for family concerts are all \$5. For more information or to request a season brochure, please visit the website at www.apollofire.org or call Apollo's Fire at (216) 320-0012.

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