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“ORCHESTRA SEATTLE | SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS” IS NOW “HARMONIA”

52-year-old organization gets a new, streamlined name.

“**Harmonia**” is the new name of the organization formerly known as “**Orchestra Seattle | Seattle Chamber Singers**” (or **OSSCS**) a choral-orchestral association founded in 1969 as the Seattle Chamber Singers by the late **George Shangrow**.

The unique ensemble consists of a **55-person chorus** and a **70-person orchestra**, but concertizes as a **unified, vocal-instrumental ensemble**, a structure that is rare among American classical music institutions. The new name seeks to reflect this harmonious blend of voices and instruments.

“It took a long time to find the right name — over a year in fact — but the new name fits who we are and how we perform today,” says **board president Stephen Hegg**. “Our old name (a bit of a tongue twister) didn’t necessarily do that.”

“Harmonia is the new name, but the mission of the organization remains the same,” says **William White**, the organization’s third-ever music director.

“Our audiences love us for our adventurous approach to programming and presenting music. A concert might include a string quartet, a piano concerto, a choral work and a symphony — all assimilated into a framework that allows the pieces to ‘converse’ with one other across genres and eras.

“I like to say we present ‘music concerts for music lovers.’ What could be more harmonious than that?”

Although the ensemble has performed works spanning the entire recorded history of notated music, it is primarily known for:

- **Annual, unabridged performances of *Messiah***, the only ensemble in the Puget Sound region to offer the entirety of Handel’s score. These concerts feature the finest vocal talent in the region, as well as our famed “dueling harpsichords.”
- **Baroque oratorio** such as the Passions and cantatas of J.S. Bach, exemplified by the renowned “Bach Year” of 1985, during which the ensemble presented 35 concerts devoted to the composer’s work.

- **Commissioning and premiering new works** in close collaboration with living composers, particularly local talents such as Carol Sams, Huntley Beyer and Robert Kechley. More recent collaborators include Sheila Bristow, Carlos Garcia and Quinn Mason.
- **Thematic programming across concerts and seasons** that explores ideas, emotions and historical moments through a variety of genres and media.

A typical Harmonia season consists of six mainstage concerts, three small-ensemble programs, and various special performances and outreach opportunities. The musicians, all volunteers, are known for their high standards and commitment to expressive performance.

Harmonia is planning to offer a full season of concerts during the 2021–2022 season (see www.HarmoniaSeattle.org for details) and is committed to bringing music back to our community safely. The organization will require that all audience members 12 and older be fully vaccinated and will offer listeners both in-person and live-streaming ticket options.