



PORTLAND  
**BAROQUE**  
ORCHESTRA  
GREAT MUSIC. PERIOD.

**For Immediate Release:**

## **Portland Baroque Orchestra Names Superstar Julian Perkins as Artistic Director**

*“Perkins’ superb keyboard artistry and deft conducting...  
guided the Portland Baroque Orchestra with terrific emotional clarity*

*...as fresh as ever”*

— Oregon ArtsWatch



December 7, 2022; Portland, OR: Pursuant to its multi-year, international search for new creative leadership, the Portland Baroque Orchestra Board of Directors is overjoyed to welcome the “exuberantly stylish” (*The Sunday Times*) conductor and keyboard virtuoso **Julian Perkins** to the helm as Artistic Director. Perkins (photo left by Andrew Craggs) represents a new generation of innovation in the field, embracing a historically *inspired* approach to period music while delivering performances full of contrast and surprise. Dubbed “The Indiana Jones of Early Music” by BBC Radio 3, Perkins brings a rare level of dynamism and adventure to his music-making, thrilling audiences and performers alike. PBO is excited about learning, evolving, and growing with Julian Perkins as its next-generation leader.

*“I am thrilled and honored to succeed Monica Huggett as Artistic Director of the Portland Baroque Orchestra. Last month, I greatly enjoyed collaborating with this group of top-class musicians, making music in ways that I found highly stimulating, moving and stylish. As Artistic Director, I eagerly anticipate our musical journey together, sharing our discoveries with as many people as possible.”*

— Julian Perkins, Artistic Director, Portland Baroque Orchestra

Perkins joins the PBO at an exciting time, and will begin the process of reimagining PBO for its next chapter following its nearly three decades under the leadership of the esteemed Monica Huggett. In 1984, numerous period ensembles, including PBO, sprang up in North America in honor of the tricentennial celebration of the birth of both Bach and Handel. As many trailblazing, founding directors are now retiring and the next generation of leadership is stepping up, a sea change is taking place in period music. Building on the diligent scholarship and historically accurate performances of their predecessors, this new cohort of leaders approach programming and performing holistically, as a living, breathing tract of music. They focus heavily on expanding the canon of repertoire, researching music that has been unheard of for centuries. As a generation raised in a culture that emphasizes diversity and equity, they often focus on including works by underrepresented composers: people of color and women whose music was rarely – if ever – published during their lifetimes. Perkins specifically is committed to audience development and access, and looks forward to elevating PBO with an integrated strategy for digital content and education initiatives to help broaden appreciation of this incredible art form.

***“Julian is a great fit for PBO, bringing a breadth of experience in artistic creation, production, and direction. His passion, knowledge, and deep commitment to early music make him the ideal person to lead Portland Baroque Orchestra into a new era of excellence.”***

— William Willingham, President of the PBO Board of Directors

Following a thrilling showdown of concerts by the final three AD candidates, journalist James Bash gave Perkins a rave review in *Oregon ArtsWatch*, and cast his own vote in Perkins’ favor, comparing the finals to a cage match and writing:

***“Perkins created an exciting program right out of the gate... All of it was shaped extremely well by Perkins, who conducted from the harpsichord... Expertly contoured by Perkins, the Muffat piece sparkled with terrific dynamic contrasts that added an element of surprise, especially with the punchy, emphatic ending... Perkins’s brilliant keyboard artistry (fleet and immaculate fingerwork) contributed mightily expressive power to the concerto. It had plenty of verve and superb dynamics, and it sounded as fresh as ever... Perkins guided the Portland Baroque Orchestra with terrific emotional clarity... Each candidate showed their best in these concerts. Each landed more than one punch. But I think that Perkins’ superb keyboard artistry and deft conducting made for an exceptional one-two combination (leading with a jab and following with a right hook) that gave him a TKO [technical knockout] in this festival of candidates.”***

Stay tuned for program announcements about Perkins’ inaugural season with PBO!

### ***ABOUT JULIAN PERKINS***

Perkins brings his experience as a leading performer on historical instruments to his extensive scope of work with period ensembles, modern orchestras, and singers of varied performing backgrounds. Shortlisted for the 2021 Gramophone Award, he is Artistic Director of Cambridge Handel Opera and Founder Director of Sounds Baroque, and performs regularly at the Salzburg Festival, Edinburgh International Festival and BBC Proms. He has directed numerous instrumental groups ranging from the Academy of Ancient Music to the Northern Chamber Orchestra, over twenty Baroque projects with Southbank Sinfonia, and opera productions for the Buxton International Festival, Cambridge Handel Opera, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Kings Place, Netherlands Opera Academy, New Chamber Opera, New Kent Opera and Snape Maltings. Perkins has featured as soloist in concertos with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Florilegium and Orchestra of The Sixteen. Perkins read music at Cambridge University before pursuing advanced studies at the Schola Cantorum, Basle, the Royal Academy of Music, London, and privately with conductor David Parry and



harpichordist Trevor Pinnock. An advocate of what he terms “Historically *Inspired* Performance,” he enjoys giving masterclasses both at music colleges and universities in the UK and abroad, and at the National Opera Studio in London. In addition to his work with PBO, recent and forthcoming engagements include directing concerts for the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera, St Paul's Sinfonia, Sounds Baroque and Southbank Sinfonia, directing staged performances of Handel's *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* for Bampton Classical Opera and appearing as the solo keyboard player in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at Munich's Bayerische Staatsoper. Discover more at [julianperkins.com](http://julianperkins.com). Photo above by Sim Canetty-Clarke.

### ***ABOUT PORTLAND BAROQUE ORCHESTRA***

For thirty-eight years, Portland Baroque Orchestra has reigned as the Pacific Northwest’s premier period ensemble, exploring the live music experiences of history with excellence in intimate venues. Founded in 1984, PBO is one of the largest period performance orchestras in the United States, and a jewel amongst Oregon’s arts organizations. Specializing in works of the Baroque and Classical eras, the orchestra also reimagines music beyond those time constraints, performing on period instruments or replicas with extraordinary artistry and spontaneity. PBO audiences experience the baroque counterparts of modern instruments, including violins with gut strings and flutes made of wood and bone, in harmony with historical rarities such as the theorbo and harpsichord, to glorious effect. Join PBO to travel back in time and savor the uniquely delicate and jubilant sounds of the orchestra as it was first conceived and experienced! [pbo.org](http://pbo.org)

### ***ABOUT MARTIN BRAGG & ASSOCIATES***

Portland Baroque Orchestra worked with the executive search firm Martin Bragg & Associates to conduct an international search for an Artistic Director. Martin Bragg & Associates, is a full service arts and culture management team offering boutique consulting services to the creative economy sector.

Portland Baroque Orchestra is supported by hundreds of generous individuals as well as foundations and corporate partners. PBO receives further support from the Oregon Arts Commission, the Oregon Cultural Trust, and the Regional Arts & Culture Council, including support from the City of Portland and Multnomah County. The Mark Spencer Hotel is the official sponsor hotel of Portland Baroque Orchestra.



**For interview inquiries, additional information, and media materials please contact:**

Amelia Lukas, [Aligned Artistry](http://AlignedArtistry)  
415-516-4851; [amelia@alignedartistry.com](mailto:amelia@alignedartistry.com)

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