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**VENICE BAROQUE ORCHESTRA:
VIVALDI'S *JUDITHA TRIUMPHANS***

Saturday, February 4, 2017, at 7:30pm
Foellinger Great Hall

PROGRAM

VENICE BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

300TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR OF VIVALDI'S ORATORIO *JUDITHA TRIUMPHANS*

Andrea Marcon, music director and conductor

Delphine Galou, Juditha
Mary-Ellen Nesi, Holofernes
Ann Hallenberg, Vagaus
Francesca Ascioti, Ozias
Silke Gäng, Abra

Women of the University of Illinois Chamber Singers
Andrew Megill, director

Antonio Vivaldi
(1678-1741)

Juditha triumphans, RV 644 (1716)
Devicta Holofernis barbarie
Sacrum militare oratorium

Oratorio in two parts, presented with one 20-minute intermission.

Juditha triumphans, commissioned by the Republic of Venice to celebrate the naval victory over the Ottoman Empire at Corfu in 1716, portrays the dramatic story of the Hebrew woman Judith overcoming the invading Assyrian general Holofernes and his army.

The Venice Baroque Orchestra is supported by the Fondazione Cassamarca in Treviso, Italy.

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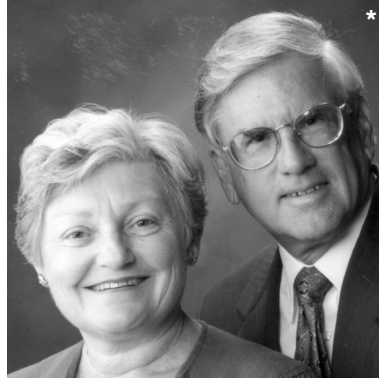
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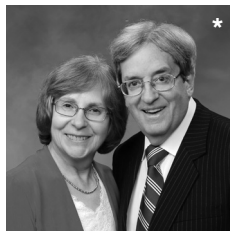
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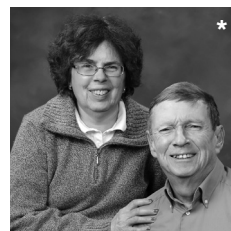
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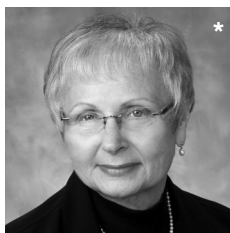
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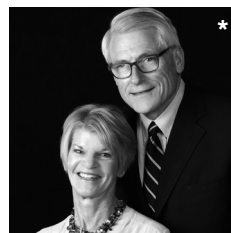
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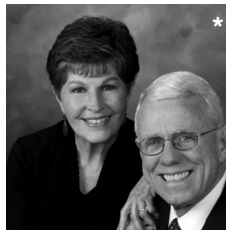


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PROGRAM NOTES

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Born March 4, 1678, in Venice, Italy

Died July 28, 1741, in Vienna, Austria

Juditha triumphans, RV 644

Known as “The Red Priest” because of his fiery red hair, Vivaldi’s personality and music reflect his nickname. He was born in Venice on March 4, 1678, the same day an earthquake hit the city. He was, in fact, ordained a priest in 1703 but continued to live with his family and study the violin with his father. He stopped saying Mass shortly after his ordination and was censured for “conduct unbecoming a priest,” probably related to his distraction by music. At the same time, he became violin master at the Pio Ospedale della Pietá in Venice, an institution that served both as a home for orphaned girls and an extraordinary musical conservatory for them. The Ospedale, with its excellent choir and orchestra, proved to be a great resource for the enterprising Vivaldi and served as an impetus for his many instrumental and vocal works. In addition to his position at the Ospedale, Vivaldi was appointed leading violinist at St. Mark’s, which contributed not only to his own tremendous virtuosity as a player but also to the demanding violin scores he would write. Despite his creativity, vitality, and popularity, Vivaldi died in poverty and was victimized by such critics as William Hayes, who found “too much mercury in his constitution,” and Sir John Hawkins who found his concertos “wild and irregular,” though he admitted to their “peculiar force and energy.” Fortunately, Vivaldi would be rescued by the nineteenth century scholarship that would mention him in the same breath as Bach.

Vivaldi’s monumental, *Juditha triumphans*, sometimes listed as *Juditha triumphans devicta Holofernes barbarie* (Judith triumphant over the barbarians of Holofernes) is the only surviving oratorio of the four that he composed. While the exact date of its composition is unknown, we do know that it was commissioned to celebrate the victory of the Venetians over the Turks in August of 1716 during the siege of Corfu. It is reported to have been performed at the Ospedale della Pietá in Venice in November of 1716 with both the male and female characters performed by women of the Ospedale. The Latin libretto was written by Jacop Cassetti based on the Book of Judith from the Old Testament but treated artistically—and operatically—by Vivaldi. How difficult it would be to squeeze *Juditha triumphans* only into the category of sacred music!

Juditha triumphans tells the dramatic story of Juditha, the young Hebrew widow who overcomes the invading Assyrians by asking for mercy from their general, Holofernes, who falls in love with her. She indulges him with much food and wine and then beheads him after he falls asleep. Juditha then flees the enemy camp and returns victorious to her town of Bethulia. The other characters in the oratorio are Vagaus, a eunuch who is Holofernes’ squire; Abra, Juditha’s handmaid; and Ozias, the high priest of Bethulia. The choir represents the Assyrian soldiers and the Bethulian women.

Some two hours in length, the entire work contains forty-eight sections, twenty-five in Part I and twenty-three in Part II each with varying sections of arias, recitatives, and chorales. Instrumental parts are essential throughout

often in a concerto-like form. The overall effect of the work is one of great lyricism and power, a combination that Vivaldi most effectively accomplished as he pointed the way to the symphonic masses of Haydn, Mozart, and even Beethoven but also maintained his individual style from the arousing entry to the work to its triumphant conclusion.

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VENICE BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1997 by Baroque scholar and harpsichordist Andrea Marcon, the Venice Baroque Orchestra (VBO) is recognized as one of the very finest period instrument ensembles. The orchestra has received wide critical acclaim for its concert and opera performances throughout North America, Europe, South America, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and China, and has appeared in many more cities across the United States than any other Baroque orchestra in history.

Committed to the rediscovery of 17th- and 18th-century masterpieces, under Marcon's leadership the VBO has given the modern-day premieres of Francesco Cavalli's *L'Orione*; Vivaldi's *Atenaide* and *Andromeda liberata*; Benedetto Marcello's *La morte d'Adone* and *Il trionfo della Poesia, e della Musica*; and Boccherini's *La Clementina*. With Teatro La Fenice in Venice, the orchestra has staged Cimarosa's *L'Olimpiade*, Handel's *Siroe*, and Galuppi's *L'Olimpiade*, and reprised *Siroe* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York in its first full staging in the United States. The orchestra has been seen worldwide through several television specials, including films by the BBC, ARTE, NTR (Netherlands), and NHK. They are the subject of three recent video recordings, and their performances were also featured on Swiss TV in the documentary film by Richard Dindo, *Vivaldi in Venice*.

2016-17 season highlights include celebrating the 300th anniversary of Vivaldi's *Juditha triumphans* premiere in Venice with performances at London's Barbican Centre, NYC's Carnegie Hall, and the Brussels Palais des Beaux-Arts; performances with violinist Viktoria Mullova at Vienna's Musikverein and in Budapest; an 18-city tour of the US featuring violinist Nicola Benedetti; and a tour of Japan with mandolinist Avi Avital.

Performance highlights include extensive tours of Europe, the United States, and Asia with countertenor Philippe Jaroussky; concerts with contralto Marie-Nicole Lemieux in France and Belgium; concerts with mandolinist Avi Avital in Italy, Croatia, Germany, Spain, France, Mexico, and a twelve-concert tour of the United States and Canada; performance in the Frauenkirche with soprano Karina Gauvin for the Dresden Music Festival; and a tour with mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená including the Istanbul Festival and the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. Highly unusual for a Baroque ensemble, the VBO premiered Philip Glass's violin concerto *The American Four Seasons*. With violinist Robert McDuffie, the orchestra appeared in 28 cities across the continent in 2010.

The latest addition to the orchestra's discography is Vivaldi concertos with Avi Avital released by Deutsche Grammophon. The previous release, featuring Philippe Jaroussky in Porpora arias on the Erato label, received a Grammy nomination. The 2012 release on Naïve, a pasticcio of Metastasio's *L'Olimpiade* featuring the recording premieres of many 18th-century opera arias, was awarded Choc du Monde de la Musique. The VBO has an extensive discography with Sony and Deutsche Grammophon. Their world-premiere recording of *Andromeda liberata* for DG was followed by violin concertos with Giuliano Carmignola; Vivaldi sinfonias and concertos for strings; Vivaldi motets and arias with soprano Simone Kermes, two discs with Ms. Kožená—Handel arias and Vivaldi arias; Vivaldi violin concertos with Viktoria Mullova and Mr. Carmignola, and Italian arias with Ms. Petibon. The orchestra's earlier discography on Sony with Mr. Carmignola includes *The Four Seasons*, previously unrecorded Vivaldi concertos, and

a collection of Bach arias featuring Angelika Kirchschrager. The orchestra has also been honored with the Diapason d'Or, Echo Award, and the Edison Award.

The Venice Baroque Orchestra is supported by Fondazione Cassamarca in Treviso

First violin

Gianpiero Zanocco
(concertmaster)
Giacomo Catana
Mauro Spinazzè
Francesco Lovato

Second violin

Giorgio Baldan
David Mazzacan
Claudio Rado
Giuseppe Cabrio

Viola

Alessandra Di Vincenzo
Meri Skejic

Cello

Massimo Raccanelli Zaborra
Federico Toffano

Violone

Alessandro Pivelli

Theorbo

Mirko Arnone
Daniele Caminiti
Maria Ferré
Ivano Zanenghi

Mandolin

Mirko Arnone

Viola d'amore

Gianpiero Zanocco

Treble viol

Rosamund Morley
Elena Smith

Tenor viol

Lawrence Lipnik

Bass viol

Arnie Tanimoto

Recorder

Priska Comploi
Michelangelo Bisconti

Oboe

Priska Comploi
Priscilla Herreid

Claren

Francesco Spendolini
Michelangelo Bisconti

Salmoè

Francesco Spendolini

Trumpet

Andreas Lackner
Thomas Steinbrucker

Timpani

Danny Mallon

Harpichord and organ

Johannes Keller

UI CHAMBER SINGERS

UI Chamber Singers is the premiere choral ensemble at the University, comprised of experienced and outstanding singers from across the entire student body. The ensemble, conducted by Dr. Andrew Megill, explores a broad range of choral music, from Medieval chant to newly commissioned works, while demonstrating the highest level of musical excellence. The Chamber Singers hosts an annual Baroque Festival in the spring that allows students to collaborate with nationally renowned Baroque specialists and performers. In addition to playing an active role in the community, the group regularly reaches out to connect with school programs across the state. The ensemble tours nationally and internationally and can be heard at conventions of America's leading choral organizations.

Sopranos

Won Joo Ahn
Colleen Bruton
Sarah Catanzaro
Grace Currie
Rebecca Mariman
Hannah McConnell
Janet McCumber
Ulrike Praeger
Caitlin Richardson
Emilie Williams

Altos

Alexis Korbe
Kathy Kew Lee
Clara Linsjo
Thereza Lituma
Allegra Martin
Gayle Adkins McDonald
Andrea Solya
Patricia Weisensee
Jennifer Wiggins
Hanqian Zhu

ANDREA MARCON (conductor, organist, and harpsichordist) was born in Treviso. He received a diploma in early music from Basel's Schola Cantorum Basiliensis for his organ and harpsichord studies with Jean-Claude Zehnder and conducting with Hans Martin Linde. He won first prize in the organ competition at Innsbruck in 1986 and, in 1991, first prize for harpsichord at Bologna. He also studied with Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini, Hans van Nieuwkoop, Jesper Christensen, Harald Vogel, and Ton Koopman.

Marcon founded the Venice Baroque Orchestra (VBO) in 1997 and has since led the group to international acclaim. Today Marcon is widely recognized as a leading interpreter of the Baroque and Classical periods. He is a regular guest conductor at the Frankfurt Opera, and he has been invited by the WDR, HR, NDR, and RSB symphony orchestras; Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo; Danish National Orchestra; and the Symphony Orchestra of Granada, where he was appointed artistic director for the 12/13 season. In October 2012, he made his highly acclaimed debut with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. He has been heralded for his performances of Marcello's *Il trionfo della Musica e della Poesia*; Vivaldi's *Orlando Furioso*, *Atenaide*, *Tito Manlio*, *Gloria*, *Magnificat*, and *Juditha triumphans*; Cavalli's *Calisto* and *Giasone*; Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and *Vespers*; Handel's *Messiah*, *Ariodante*, and *Alcina*; and Bach's cantatas and *Mass in B minor*. His repertoire also spans Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert symphonies and early Rossini operas.

Highlights of recent seasons included a tour to Frankfurt, Munich, Paris, Brussels, London, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam with mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená; performances of the *Messiah* in Granada, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* in Musikverein with Anna Netrebko and Andreas Scholl; Charpentier's *Medée* in Frankfurt, and Monteverdi's *Vespers* in Schwetzingen and Spain. In fall 2013 he made an extensive tour of Europe with Philippe Jaroussky and the Venice Baroque Orchestra. He brought together for the first time violinists Viktoria Mullova and Giuliano Carmignola for performances of Baroque double concertos in France, Spain, and Austria, and toured as organist and conductor several times in Japan. In 2007 he conducted Cecilia Bartoli and the VBO in Handel arias at the Tuscan Sun Festival in Cortona and made his debut at the Salzburg Festival. He leads one opera production per year at the Frankfurt Opera House and with La Cetra in Basel. Mr. Marcon has twice led opera productions at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. In February 2015 Andrea Marcon made his debut with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in Munich.

Marcon has recorded more than 50 CDs for labels including Deutsche Grammophon, Sony, and Erato/Warner. For his recordings as organist and harpsichordist, he was awarded four times with the Deutschen Schallplatten Kritik prize. Marcon's recordings as conductor have also received several accolades, including the Diapason D'Or, Choc du Monde de la Musique, the Vivaldi Award of the Cini Foundation, Germany's Echo Award, and the Edison Prize. In addition to his numerous recordings with the Venice Baroque Orchestra, he has recorded Mozart works with the Swiss-based ensemble La Cetra.

Marcon is professor of harpsichord, organ, and interpretation at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. In 1982 he was founding harpsichordist and organist for the Treviso-based ensemble, *Sonatori de la Gioiosa Marca* (1982-1997). He also founded and served as artistic director of the International Organ Festival (Città di Treviso), where he helped facilitate the restoration of the city's historic organs.

ANN HALLENBERG (mezzo-soprano) from Sweden rose to fame in 2003 when she replaced Cecilia Bartoli on one day's notice in Handel's *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* at the Opernhaus Zürich. She is now established as one of Europe's leading mezzo-sopranos.

Hallenberg regularly appears in opera houses and festivals such as Teatro alla Scala Milan, Teatro La Fenice Venice, Teatro Real Madrid, Theater an der Wien, Opernhaus Zürich, Opéra National Paris, Opéra de Lyon, Théâtre de La Monnaie Brussels, Dutch National Opera Amsterdam, Bayerische Staatsoper München, Staatsoper Berlin, Semperoper Dresden, Royal Swedish Opera, Salzburg Festival, Verbier Festival, and the Edinburgh Festival.

Her operatic repertoire includes a large number of roles by Rossini, Mozart, Gluck, Massenet, Handel, Vivaldi, and Monteverdi. She frequently appears throughout Europe and North America in an unusually vast repertoire that spans Monteverdi, Cavalli, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Berlioz, Brahms, Mahler, Chausson, and contemporary works of Franz Waxman and Daniel Börtz.

Hallenberg regularly works with conductors including Fabio Biondi, Ivor Bolton, William Christie, Patrick Fournillier, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Emmanuelle Haïm, Philippe Herreweghe, Paavo Järvi, Louis Langrée, Marc Minkowski, Christopher Moulds, Riccardo Muti,

Kent Nagano, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir Antonio Pappano, Christophe Rousset, Lothar Zagrosek, and Alberto Zedda.

Her more than 40 CD and DVD recordings include music by Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Mozart, Haydn, Gluck, Rossini, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Bruckner. At the International Opera Awards in London in May 2016, her solo CD *Agrippina* won the award for (Best Operatic Recital). This was her second award in the category, having also won in 2014.

DELPHINE GALOU (contralto) was born in Paris. She studied philosophy at the Sorbonne, and also studied piano and singing. In 2004, she was selected Discovery of the Year by the French Association for the Promotion of Young Artists (Adami). She decided to specialize in the Baroque repertoire, leading to collaborations with numerous ensembles including Balthasar Neumann Ensemble (Thomas Hengelbrock), I Barocchisti (Diego Fasolis), Accademia Bizantina (Ottavio Dantone), Collegium 1704 (Václav Luks), the Venice Baroque Orchestra (Andrea Marcon), Il Complesso Barocco (Alan Curtis), Les Siècles (François-Xavier Roth), Les Arts Florissants (Jonathan Cohen), Le Concert des Nations (Jordi Savall), the Ensemble Matheus (Jean-Christophe Spinosi), Les Musiciens du Louvre (Marc Minkowski), Le Concert d'Astrée (Emmanuelle Haïm), Les Ambassadeurs (Alexis Kossenko) and Les Talens Lyriques (Christophe Rousset).

Galou has performed at many of the leading venues including Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam, the Royal Opera House London, Theater St. Gallen, Theater Basel, the Zurich Opera, the Handel Festival in Karlsruhe, the Schwetzingen Festival, Staatsoper Berlin, Theater an der Wien, and Maggio Musicale in Firenze. Her discography includes, among others, Porpora's *Vespro per la Festività*

dell'Assunta under the baton of Martin Gester (Live recording *Ambronay*), Vivaldi's *Teuzzone* under Jordi Savall (Naïve), Vivaldi's *Orlando 1714* under Federico Maria Sardelli (Naïve), Vivaldi's *L'incoronazione di Dario* under Ottavio Dantone (Naïve), Caldara's *La Concordia dei Pianeti* under Andrea Marcon (Deutsche Grammophon) as well as Vivaldi's *L'incoronazione di Dario* and Rossini's *La Petite Messe Solennelle* under Ottavio Dantone (Naïve).

FRANCESCA ASCIOTI (contralto) was born in Calabria and graduated from the Conservatory of Brescia (Luca Marenzio). In 2010 she won a scholarship to pursue post-graduate studies at the (Ateneo Musicale) in Sulmona. Her first operatic experience was at the Sulmona Academy, debuting in the role of Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* by Mozart. Her primary vocal professors were Bernardette Manca di Nissa, Alberto Rinaldi, and Teresa Berganza.

In November 2013 she appeared in the role of Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff* at G. Verdi Theatre in Busseto. In this production, directed by Marina Bianchi and in cooperation with the Accademia Teatro alla Scala di Milano and the Regio Theatre of Parma, she performed opposite Renato Bruson as Falstaff.

Ascioti was a finalist in the Marcello Giordani Competition and won a prize for her debut in the role of Mamma Lucia in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Vero Beach Opera Festival in Florida in January 2014.

Recent performances have included Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at Massimo Bellini Theatre of Catania, the Baroness of Champigny in Nino Rota's *Cappello di Paglia di Firenze* at the Petruzzelli Theatre of Bari, Ozias in *Juditha triumphans* at La Fenice in Venice, Giunone in

La Fida Ninfa of Vivaldi at Theater Basel and the Baden Baden Festspielhaus, Maddalena in *Rigoletto* at Teatro Regio di Parma, and the role of Euterpe in Handel's *Parnasso in Festa* at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

MARY-ELLEN NESI (mezzo-soprano) was born in Montreal, Canada, of Greek parents and studied in London and in Athens.

She has appeared in opera houses including Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Semperoper Dresden, Frankfurt Opera, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Theater an der Wien, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Opéra du Rhin Strasbourg, Opéra de Versailles, Opéra de Nice, The Royal Opera House, Teatro Olimpico Rome, Teatro Comunale Florence, Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Greek National Opera, Thessaloniki Opera, Sao Carlos Opera Lisbon, and Teatro de la Maestranza Seville, as well as festivals such as the Spoleto Festival, Boston Early Music Festival, and the Handel Festivals of Göttingen and Halle.

She has an unusually wide range of operatic roles including the title role in *Carmen*, Adalgisa in *Norma*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the title role in *La Cenerentola*, Giovanna Seymour in *Anna Bolena*, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Charlotte in *Werther*, Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Hänsel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, and Maddalena in *Rigoletto*. She has created a number of roles in contemporary operas and sung more than 30 leading roles in Baroque operas by Monteverdi, Handel, Vivaldi, Paisiello, Scarlatti, and Pergolesi.

Nesi regularly performs in concerts and has collaborated with prominent conductors including Ivor Bolton, Frederic Chaslin, Theodor Currentzis, Alan Curtis, Ruben Dubrovsky, Ottavio Dantone, Marcello Di Lisa, Charles Dutoit, Diego Fasolis,

Eduardo López Banzo, Andrea Marcon, Miguel Gómez Martínez, Rainer Mühlbach, George Petrou, Federico Maria Sardelli, and Jean-Christophe Spinosi.

Her more than 30 CD and DVD recordings include operas, cantatas, masses, and oratorios by Mozart, Gluck, Handel, Vivaldi, Hasse, Scarlatti, Pergolesi, and Leo.

SILKE GÄNG (mezzo-soprano) was born near Heidelberg, Germany, and studied singing at the Hochschule für Musik in Basel, Switzerland. As a Heidelberger Frühling scholarship holder in 2012, she studied with Thomas Hampson, Brigitte Fassbaender, Graham Johnson, and Wolfram Rieger. Gäng has won various international awards, including at the Fifth International Ernst Haefliger competition. She has appeared twice at the Lucerne Festival, in the opera *Nacht* by G. F. Haas in 2013, and in a song recital in 2015.

Highlights of the 2016/17 season include the role of Annio in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*, Speranza/Persephone in Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, and performance and recording of Handel's *Parnasso in Festa* with La Cetra Basel and Andrea Marcon. In 2015/16 she gave song recitals at the Lavaux Festival and at the Heidelberger Frühling Festival alongside Thomas Hampson. Her several recordings include a solo CD of songs based on poems of Walt Whitman and Mascha Kaléko. She appeared in the modern-day premiere of Heinichen's 1720 opera *Flavio Crispo* with the Stuttgart Baroque Orchestra under Jörg Halubek, and made her Italian debut in Venice in Vivaldi's *Gloria*.

Gäng has made several appearances at Theater Basel, including the title role in *Juditha triumphans*, as Nérine in Charpentier's *Médée*, and as singer and speaker in 12 concerts at the Davos Festival. Other highlights from recent years include performances at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Handel Festival in Halle, the Schwetzingen Festival, the Liederhalle Stuttgart, the Staatstheater Stuttgart, Theater Freiburg, the Royal Theatre of Norwich, and the Salzburg Festival.