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Press Contact: Christina Jensen | Jensen Artists
646.536.7864 x1 | christina@jensenartists.com

**Simone Kermes: *Inferno e Paradiso*
From Bach to Lady Gaga, Handel to Udo Jürgens**



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Sony Classical
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Lava, La Diva, and Bel Canto are the titles of several albums from **Simone Kermes**. Each title stands not only for the album's program but equally for Kermes herself – for her musicianship, personality, radiance and, most of all, the vocal skills that have earned her countless awards and distinctions. This Leipzig-born singer has a special rapport with baroque music.

Small wonder, then, that her latest album, *Inferno e Paradiso*, abounds in arias by baroque composers that have long numbered among her absolute favorites, including George Frideric Handel, Johann Adolph Hasse and Antonio Caldara. This time the program hinges on the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Christian Virtues, and Kermes has once again opened up entirely new avenues to baroque song through special arrangements. The pop and rock items in her selection, by Lady Gaga (“Poker Face”), Udo Jürgens (“Aber bitte mit Sahne”), Sting (“Fields of Gold”) and Led Zeppelin (“Stairway to Heaven”), have all been transformed into baroque hits by the Finnish composer-arranger Jarkko Riihimäki. Or, as Kermes herself puts it, “Many an ‘aria’ by Sting or Led Zeppelin sounds as baroque as if it had lain beneath a layer of dust on a London bookshelf since the 17th century.” Like the ten original baroque arias in her selection, she has recorded these songs for Sony Classical with her period ensemble **Amici Veneziani**. In the case of Hasse’s “Non ha più pace” the recording is even a world première.

A total of 14 arias from four centuries can be heard on *Inferno e Paradiso*. Each aria stands for a deadly sin or a Christian virtue. “Stairway to Heaven”, for example, stands for pride, Bach’s “Erbarme dich, mein Gott” for humility. Lady Gaga’s “Poker Face” stands for lust, Riccardo Broschi’s “Qual guerriero in campo

armato" for (vocal) diligence. Udo Jürgens's "Aber bitte mit Sahne" (With whipped cream, please) is assigned to the sin of gluttony, while the virtue of moderation is linked with Antonio Vivaldi's "Gelido in ogni vena". All the arias and songs showcase Kermes's acclaimed vocal technique and wealth of expression.