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Boston Early Music Festival Announces 2011–2012 Boston Concert Series: A Season of Triumphant Returns

Cambridge, MA – September 6, 2011 – The **Boston Early Music Festival** announces the **2011–2012 BEMF Concert Series**, bringing some of Early Music’s most acclaimed soloists and ensembles to Boston audiences for rare performances. Now in its 22nd season of presenting an annual series in Boston, BEMF is thrilled to offer a season of triumphant returns by artists who have consistently thrilled Boston audiences, as well as the fourth annual BEMF Chamber Opera Series production, continuing this “unofficial kickoff to the holiday season” (*The Boston Globe*) on Thanksgiving weekend.

The season opens on **Friday, October 21 at 8pm at First Church in Cambridge, Congregational** as **Dame Emma Kirkby, soprano, and Jakob Lindberg, lute**, present a program entitled *Love songs, Lute solos, and Laments*. Kirkby, the “queen of Early Music,” (*Decca*) has been a frequent guest of BEMF, last appearing with Mr. Lindberg in October, 2009.

On **Sunday, October 23 at 3pm at New England Conservatory’s Jordan Hall**, BEMF will collaborate with **Celebrity Series of Boston** to present **The English Concert** and countertenor **Andreas Scholl**. This legendary singer made his BEMF début in 2004 and returns with **Harry Bicket**, conductor and harpsichord, to perform scenes from Purcell’s *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen*.

In early November, BEMF presents the American orchestra, **Apollo’s Fire** – together with the star of BEMF’s June 2011 Festival Opera, countertenor **Philippe Jaroussky** – in a program of vocal fireworks by Handel and Vivaldi on **Saturday, November 5 at 8pm at Emmanuel Church in Boston**. Led by Music Director **Jeannette Sorrell**, the Cleveland based ensemble have been praised as “the USA’s hottest baroque band” (*Classical Music Magazine*) and made their BEMF début in February, 2006. With some of the highest honors in classical music recording and a recent profile in the *New York Times Magazine*, Jaroussky has emerged as one of the most talented and dynamic singers performing today.

On Thanksgiving weekend, **Saturday, November 26 at 8pm and Sunday, November 27 at 3pm at New England Conservatory’s Jordan Hall**, audiences will enjoy the fourth annual **BEMF Chamber Opera Series** production with a **Double Bill of Charpentier: *La Descente d’Orphée aux Enfers* and *La Couronne de Fleurs***. With three years of sold-out houses, the BEMF Chamber Opera Series has become one of Boston’s can’t-miss musical events. The semi-staged production will be led by Musical Directors **Paul O’Dette** and **Stephen Stubbs** and Stage Director **Gilbert Blin**; tenor **Aaron Sheehan** will be featured in the title role of Orphée.

In December, BEMF celebrates the season as British vocal ensemble **Stile Antico** present *Puer Natus Est – Tudor Music for Christmas and Advent* on **Saturday, December 17 at 8pm at St. Paul Church in Cambridge**. These audience favorites kicked off BEMF’s 2010–2011 Season with a program of Renaissance masterworks that won them a standing ovation and rave reviews.

A mainstay of the biennial June Festivals, **Tragicomedia** makes its first appearance on the Boston Concert Series in over 6 years on **Saturday, January 28 at 8pm at First Church Cambridge, Congregational** in a program of early Handel cantatas that will feature **Shannon Mercer**, soprano, and **Douglas Williams**, baritone. The all-star instrumentalists of Tragicomedia include BEMF Musical Directors **Stephen Stubbs** (*theorbo*) and **Paul O'Dette** (*archlute*), **Kristian Bezuidenhout**, *harpsichord*, and **Erin Headley**, *viola da gamba*.

Grammy-nominated orchestra **Europa Galante** with director/violinist **Fabio Biondi**, are in high demand across the globe with appearances in the most prestigious venues and festivals, including their October, 2005 début with BEMF. They return on **Sunday, February 5 at 4pm at Sanders Theatre at Harvard University, Cambridge**, in a program showcasing both familiar masterpieces and newly discovered gems by Haydn, Vivaldi, Bach, Handel, Brioschi, and Scaccia.

Richard Egarr has established himself as an impeccably versatile musician, earning acclaim both as a keyboard soloist and as a conductor. He has appeared in both roles in the past with BEMF, most recently leading the Academy of Ancient Music in February, 2008, but he makes his first solo recital on **Friday, February 10 at 8pm at First Church Cambridge, Congregational** in repertoire that showcases masterworks of the Harpsichord's "Golden Century" by Couperin, Blow, Froberger, and Purcell.

In a season of triumphant returns, one of BEMF's longest relationships has been with **Sequentia**, who first appeared at the 1989 Festival. This famed medieval music ensemble will return to the BEMF stage in a program entitled *Fragments for the End of Time*, an exploration of music based on Apocalyptic texts from over a thousand years ago that is enthralling and exotic, on **Saturday, March 3 at 8pm at Houghton Chapel at Wellesley College, Wellesley**. **Benjamin Bagby**, voice, harps, symphonia, is joined by **Norbert Rodenkirchen**, flutes, harp, for this rare glimpse into an archaic musical world.

On **Saturday, March 31 at 8pm at St. Paul Church, Cambridge**, beloved vocal ensemble **The Tallis Scholars** with **Peter Phillips**, director, make their 23rd annual appearance with BEMF in a program of music by Jean Mouton and William Cornysh. Pioneers in the performance of the glorious vocal music of the Renaissance, these singers continue to collect accolades for transcendent performances that are as intricately precise as they are expressively soulful. Their program is inspired by the splendor and majesty of an historic meeting of English and French kings in 1520 where the most accomplished composers of both kingdoms arranged spectacular musical presentations.

This season will close with the **Flanders Recorder Quartet** in a program celebrating J.S. Bach on **Saturday, April 28 at 8pm at Sanders Theatre at Harvard University, Cambridge**. A favorite of BEMF audiences since 1995, this Belgian ensemble has thrilled audiences on five continents with agile and fluent playing and a dazzling interplay among these accomplished virtuosos. Just as Bach arranged music of other composers he admired, these gifted musicians have prepared their own arrangements reclaiming Bach for the recorder.

Subscriptions are now on sale through the Boston Early Music Festival Box Office at **617-661-1812** or online at **WWW.BEMF.ORG**. Packages start as low as \$90 for three programs. Individual tickets will go on sale on September 12, 2011.

The 2011–2012 Boston Early Music Festival Boston Concert Series is presented with support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, National Endowment for the Arts, ConstellationCenter, 99.5 All Classical, Harpsichord Clearing House, Zuckermann Harpsichords International, The Gregory E. Bulger Foundation, U. S. Trust/Bank of America Private Wealth Management, and GTC Law Group.

BEMF 2011–2012 SEASON CALENDAR

Dame Emma Kirkby, soprano & Jakob Lindberg, lute

Friday, October 21, 2011 at 8pm

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational (11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA)

Love songs, Lute solos, and Laments

17th-century love songs from Britain and Italy

Tickets: \$66 - \$49 - \$38 - \$19

The English Concert with Andreas Scholl, countertenor

Harry Bicket, conductor & harpsichord

Sunday, October 23, 2011 at 3pm

New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall (30 Gainsborough Street, Boston, MA)

Purcell: Scenes from King Arthur and The Fairy Queen

Subscriber-Only Event. Presented in partnership with the Celebrity Series of Boston.

Apollo's Fire with Philippe Jaroussky, countertenor

Jeannette Sorrell, Music Director

Saturday, November 5, 2011 at 8pm

Emmanuel Church (15 Newbury Street, Boston, MA)

Handel and Vivaldi: Fireworks

Dramatic arias and fiery concertos by Handel and Vivaldi

Tickets: \$66 - \$49 - \$38 - \$19

BEMF Chamber Opera Series presenting A Double Bill of Charpentier

Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs, Musical Directors

Gilbert Blin, Stage Director / Anna Watkins, Costume Designer

Saturday, November 26, 2010 at 8pm & Sunday, November 27, 2010 at 3pm

New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall (30 Gainsborough Street, Boston, MA)

Charpentier: *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* and *La Couronne de Fleurs*

Aaron Sheehan as Orphée

Tickets: \$125 - \$66 - \$49 - \$38 - \$19

Stile Antico

Saturday, December 17, 2011 at 8pm

St. Paul Church, Cambridge (29 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA)

Puer Natus Est—Tudor Music for Christmas and Advent

Masterpieces for the season by Tallis, Byrd, Taverner, Sheppard, and others

Tickets: \$66 - \$49 - \$38 - \$19

Tragicomedia

Stephen Stubbs, director

Paul O'Dette, archlute; Kristian Bezuidenhout, harpsichord; Erin Headley, viola da gamba

Shannon Mercer, soprano / Douglas Williams, bass-baritone

Saturday, January 28, 2012 at 8pm

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational (11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA)

Early Handel Cantatas

Tickets: \$66 - \$49 - \$38 - \$19

Europa Galante

Fabio Biondi, *director & violin*

Saturday, February 5, 2012 at 4pm

Sanders Theatre at Harvard University (45 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA)

New Faces and Old: Music of Brioschi, Haydn, Scaccia, Vivaldi, Bach, and Handel

Tickets: \$100 - \$66 - \$49 - \$38 - \$19

Richard Egarr, *harpsichord*

Friday, February 10, 2012 at 8pm

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational (11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA)

The Harpsichord's Golden Century: Music of Couperin, Blow, Froberger, and Purcell

Tickets: \$66 - \$49 - \$38 - \$19

Sequentia

Benjamin Bagby, *voice, harps, & symphonia* / **Norbert Rodenkirchen**, *flutes & harp*

Saturday, March 3, 2012 at 8pm

Houghton Chapel at Wellesley College (106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA)

Fragments for the End of Time

A co-presentation with the Concert Series at Wellesley

Tickets: \$25 (general admission)

The Tallis Scholars

Peter Phillips, *director*

Saturday, March 31, 2012 at 8pm

St. Paul Church, Cambridge (29 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA)

The Field of the Cloth of Gold: Music by Jean Mouton and William Cornysh

Tickets: \$66 - \$49 - \$38 - \$19

Flanders Recorder Quartet

Friday, April 27, 2012 at 8pm

Sanders Theatre at Harvard University (45 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA)

Reclaiming Bach for the Recorder

Tickets: \$100 - \$66 - \$49 - \$38 - \$19

Dates, times, venues, artists, and programs are subject to change.

ABOUT THE BOSTON EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL:

Recognized as the preeminent early music presenting organization in North America, the **Boston Early Music Festival** has been credited with securing Boston's reputation as "America's early music capital" (*The Boston Globe*). Founded in 1981, the Boston Early Music Festival offers diverse programs and activities, including three Grammy-nominated opera recordings, an annual concert series that brings early music's brightest stars to the Boston and New York concert stages, and a biennial week-long Festival and Exhibition recognized as the "world's leading festival of early music" (*The Times*, London). The 17th Boston Early Music Festival is planned for June 9–16, 2013.

For more information, images, press tickets, or to schedule an interview, please contact Kathleen Fay at 617-661-1812 or email kathy@bemf.org.

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