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# Two Boston Early Music Festival recordings win 2015 ECHO Klassik Awards

Cambridge, MA – The winners for the 2015 ECHO Klassik Awards have been announced and two BEMF recordings are among the prestigious honorees. Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* and *La Couronne de Fleurs* for cpo (Classic Produktion Osnabrück), also a 2015 GRAMMY Award-winner, takes home Opera Recording of the Year in the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> Century Opera field for the **Boston Early Music Festival Vocal & Chamber Ensembles** and Musical Directors **Paul O'Dette** and **Stephen Stubbs**. The lead soloists of BEMF's recording of Steffani's *Niobe, Regina di Tebe* for ERATO/Warner Classics, **Philippe Jaroussky** and **Karina Gauvin**, share the prize for World Premiere Recording of the Year for that 3-CD set. Germany's ECHO Klassik is among the most prestigious honors in classical music, given annually by the Deutsche Phono-Akademie since 1994. The awards will be presented in a lavish, televised ceremony on Sunday, October 18, 2015 at Konzerthaus Berlin.

## CHARPENTIER'S LA DESCENTE D'ORPHÉE AUX ENFERS AND LA COURONNE DE FLEURS

Only days after the conclusion of BEMF's June 2013 Festival, members of the **Boston Early Music Festival Vocal & Chamber Ensembles** travelled to the acoustically brilliant Sendesaal Studio in Bremen, Germany to make a recording of Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* and *La Couronne de Fleurs* for cpo (Classic Produktion Osnabrück). BEMF Artistic Directors **Paul O'Dette** and **Stephen Stubbs** led the recording, which features eleven singers from the **BEMF Vocal Ensemble**. BEMF Orchestra Director **Robert Mealy** served as concertmaster of the ten-member **BEMF Chamber Ensemble** and BEMF Opera Director **Gilbert Blin** served as Drama Coach. This recording was released in March 2014, to coincide with BEMF's North American tour of the same repertoire. The *Vancouver Observer* hailed the production for "exceptional performances – the kind that open up your mind in ways you didn't know were possible."

### STEFFANI'S NIOBE. REGINA DI TEBE

Originally presented as the 2011 Festival Operatic Centerpiece, *Niobe, Regina di Tebe* is the seventh in BEMF's series of Baroque Opera Recordings that have earned four GRAMMY nominations including one GRAMMY Award for Best Opera Recording. Released in January 2015 on the ERATO/Warner Classics label, the 3-CD set is led by Musical Directors **Paul O'Dette** and **Stephen Stubbs** and features a stellar cast including soprano **Karina Gauvin** in the title role of Niobe and countertenor **Philippe Jaroussky** reprising his role as King Anfione from the original 2011 production. BEMF Orchestra Director **Robert Mealy** leads the 35 member BEMF Orchestra and BEMF Opera Director **Gilbert Blin** serves as Drama Coach. The recording has been met with enormous acclaim, including Gramophone Magazine's Recording of the Month and a *Diapason D'Or*.

# ABOUT THE BEMF BAROQUE OPERA PROJECT

One of BEMF's main goals is to unearth and present lesser-known Baroque operas performed by the world's leading musicians armed with the latest information on period singing, orchestral performance, costuming, dance, and staging. BEMF operas reproduce the Baroque's stunning palette of sound by bringing together today's leading operatic superstars and a wealth of instrumental talent from across the globe to one stage for historic presentations, all zestfully led from the pit by the BEMF Artistic Directors Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs, and creatively reimagined for the stage by BEMF Opera Director Gilbert Blin. Since 2008, the BEMF Chamber Opera Series has taken this internationally acclaimed musicianship, scholarship, and direction and focused it on small-scale works in intimate productions each Thanksgiving weekend. Two productions from the Chamber Opera Series have also been presented on tour across North America: Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in 2011 and Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* and *La Couronne de Fleurs* in 2014.

In 2004, BEMF initiated a series of recordings to preserve its groundbreaking Baroque opera creations and to attempt to fill the gaps in the current discography of Western opera. The first three CDs in the series earned GRAMMY nominations for Best Opera Recording and Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* and *La Couronne de Fleurs* won in this category at the 2015 GRAMMY Awards. An eighth recording, Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, is planned for release later in 2015 on the German label cpo (Classic Produktion Osnabrück).

### **RESOURCES**

Images from the original 2011 production of Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* <a href="http://www.bemf.org/pages/press/images">http://www.bemf.org/pages/press/images</a> orphee.htm

Images from the original 2011 production of Steffani's *Niobe, Regina di Tebe* http://www.bemf.org/pages/press/images\_niobe.htm

## **ABOUT THE BOSTON EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL:**

Recognized as the preeminent early music presenter and Baroque opera producer in North America, the **Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF)** has been credited with securing Boston's reputation as "America's early music capital" (*The Boston Globe*). Founded in 1981, BEMF offers diverse programs and activities, including one GRAMMY® Award-winning and three GRAMMY® Award-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 19<sup>th</sup> Boston Early Music Festival will take place from June 11–18, 2017, and will feature the fully staged performances of André Campra's *Le Carnaval de Venise* as the Centerpiece Opera. BEMF's Artistic Leadership includes Artistic Directors **Paul O'Dette** and **Stephen Stubbs**, Opera Director **Gilbert Blin**, and Orchestra Director **Robert Mealy**.

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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