

Boston Early Music Festival

INTERNATIONAL BAROQUE OPERA • CELEBRATED CONCERTS • WORLD-FAMOUS EXHIBITION

Boston Early Music Festival
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 26, 2017

The Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Ensemble presents a program of vocal duets by Agostino Steffani – Thursday, October 5, in New York City, and Friday, October 6, in Boston.

ARTISTS: Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Ensemble
Paul O’Dette & Stephen Stubbs, *Musical Directors*

Amanda Forsythe & Emőke Baráth, *soprano*
Colin Balzer, *tenor*; Christian Immler, *baritone*

Paul O’Dette, *theorbo*; Stephen Stubbs, *Baroque guitar*; Maxine Eilander, *Baroque harp*;
Michael Sponseller, *harpsichord*; Erin Headley, *viola da gamba*

WHEN: Thursday, October 5, 2017 at 7:30pm

Gilder Lehrman Hall at the Morgan Library and Museum, 225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street, New York, NY

Friday, October 6, 2017 at 8:00pm

New England Conservatory’s Jordan Hall, 30 Gainsborough Street, Boston, MA

PROGRAM: Steffani: Duets of Love and Passion

Agostino Steffani: *Tengo per infallibile*

Francesco Corbetto: *Sinfonia à due*

Steffani: *Quanto care al cor*

Girolamo Frescobaldi: *Partita sopra la Ciaccona*

Steffani: *E perchè non m’uccidete*

George Frideric Handel: *Air and Variations* “Harmonious Blacksmith”

Steffani: *Su, ferisci, alato arciero*

Steffani: *Occhi belli, non più*

Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger: *Toccata arpeggiata*

Steffani: *Gelosia*

Handel: *Col partir la bella Clori*

Steffani: *Fulminate, saettate*

TICKETS: Tickets for the Boston performance are priced at **\$25, \$45, \$55, \$75, and \$100** each, and can be purchased at www.BEMF.org and **617-661-1812**; a \$5 discount for students, seniors, and groups is available by calling 617-661-1812. Subscription discounts are available with the purchase of three or more programs on the 2017-2018 Season.

Tickets for the New York performance are priced at **\$35** for Morgan members and **\$45** for non-members; tickets for the full BEMF Series of three concerts at the Morgan are priced at **\$90** for members and **\$120** for non-members. Tickets can be purchased at www.themorgan.org/programs/concerts and at **212-685-0008 ext. 560**.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

For our Season opening concert, BEMF's GRAMMY-winning Artistic Directors Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs lead the BEMF Chamber Ensemble and a stunning group of vocalists in a program that continues BEMF's acclaimed exploration of the music of Agostino Steffani. Enjoy rare performances of this great composer's enchanting vocal duets and see why he was such an essential inspiration in the musical development of the young Handel and has become a hallmark of our organization.

The outstanding feature of Steffani's chamber duets is their contrapuntal sophistication, requiring extremely accomplished solo singers who also have the sensitivity necessary for complex chamber music. Johann Mattheson confirmed the preeminence of these works in 1739, writing that "The said Steffani was incomparably outstanding in this type, before all others whom I know, and to this hour deserves to be taken as a model." In fact, the young musical lion George Frideric Handel acquired a book of the duets in 1706, and did just that. This program alternates these demanding and impressive duets featuring our four outstanding vocalists with instrumental works that allow these equally accomplished musicians to shine.

This concert is part of a [six-city North American tour](#) coinciding with the release of BEMF's recording on the CPO label of this repertoire with the same singers. Join us to celebrate the latest addition to our renowned discography, and be sure to stay for a CD signing following the concert!

ASSOCIATED EVENTS:

Before each performance, there will be a 7pm Pre-Concert Talk with BEMF Co-Directors Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Paul O'Dette has been described as "the clearest case of genius ever to touch his instrument" (*Toronto Globe and Mail*). He appears regularly at major festivals throughout the world performing lute recitals and in chamber music programs with leading early music colleagues. While best known for his recitals and recordings of virtuoso solo lute music, Paul O'Dette is also active as a conductor of Baroque opera. Together with Stephen Stubbs he won a Grammy as conductor in 2015 for Best Opera Recording, as well as an Echo Klassik Award, for their recording of Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* with the Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Ensemble. Paul O'Dette is Professor of Lute and Director of Early Music at the Eastman School of Music and Artistic Co-Director of the Boston Early Music Festival.

Stephen Stubbs returned from Bremen, Germany, to his native Seattle in 2006 as one of the world's most respected lutenists, conductors, and Baroque opera specialists. In 2007, he established Pacific MusicWorks, reflecting his lifelong interest in both early music and contemporary performance. Mr. Stubbs is the Boston Early Music Festival's Artistic Co-Director alongside his long-time colleague Paul O'Dette. Stubbs and O'Dette are also musical directors of all BEMF operas, winning the Grammy for Best Opera Recording in 2015. Recent appearances include Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and Gluck's *Orfeo* in Bilbao, Mozart's *Magic Flute* and *Così fan tutte* in Hawaii, and Handel's *Agrippina* and *Semele* for Opera Omaha. Since 2013, Stephen has been on the faculty of the University of Washington School of Music.

Amanda Forsythe has sung principal roles in the opera houses of Geneva and Munich, the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Ms. Forsythe sings Euridice on Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* with BEMF, which won the Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording. Her début solo album of Handel arias was released in Fall 2015 on the Avie label to great acclaim.

Emőke Baráth has performed in many of Alan Curtis's Handel opera productions, including Sesto in *Giulio Cesare*, Antigona in *Admeto*, Oriana in *Amadigi di Gaula*, and Alceste in *Arianna in Creta*. She regularly sings Handel and Bach with the Freiburger Barockorchester, Il Pomo d'Oro, Accademia Bizantina, and Les Musiciens du Louvre, and is increasingly in demand to perform Mozart, and has appeared as Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, and Despina in *Così fan tutte*.

Colin Balzer has sung acclaimed concerts and recitals across the United States and Canada. In Europe, he has been featured in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at the Bolshoi and in Aix-en-Provence, and Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* in Aix and Luxembourg, and has appeared with Collegium Vocale Gent, Musiciens du Louvre, and the Rotterdam Philharmonic. His performances with the Boston Early Music Festival include Monteverdi's *Ulisse*, Handel's *Almira*, Steffani's *Niobe*, Lully's *Psyché*, and Mattheson's *Boris Goudenow*.

Christian Immler has worked with many of the great conductors, including Harnoncourt, Herreweghe, Suzuki, and Christie, performing at the Salzburg and Lucerne Festivals, the BBC Proms, Opéra Comique Paris, the Grand Théâtre Genève, and the Boston Early Music Festival. His recordings have been awarded prizes such as the Diapason d'Or, Echo Klassik Preis, and a Grammy nomination. Christian is Professor of Voice at the Musikhochschule in Lausanne/Fribourg. His website is at www.christianimmler.com.

RESOURCES:

Download artist photos: <http://www.bemf.org/pages/press/images.htm>

BEMF's 2017–2018 Season Press Release: http://www.bemf.org/pages/press/082317_1718season.htm

ABOUT THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM:

The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today, more than a century after its founding, The Morgan serves as a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historical site. Located at Madison Avenue and 36th Street, its collection includes world-renowned collections of drawings, literary and historical manuscripts, musical scores, medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, printed books, photography, and ancient near Eastern seals and tablets. Gilder Lehrman Hall, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, was opened by the Morgan in May 2006, and seats 264 people, providing a uniquely intimate concert venue. This marks the Boston Early Music Festival's 12th season of concerts at the Morgan Library & Museum.

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-winning and four 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 20th Boston Early Music Festival will take place from June 9-16, 2019, and will feature fully staged performances of Agostino Steffani's *Orlando generoso* as the centerpiece opera. BEMF's Artistic Leadership includes Artistic Directors **Paul O'Dette** and **Stephen Stubbs**, Opera Director **Gilbert Blin**, Orchestra Director **Robert Mealy**, and Dance Director **Melinda Sullivan**.

The 2017–2018 Boston Early Music Festival Concert Series is presented with support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, National Endowment for the Arts, ConstellationCenter, WGBH Radio Boston, Harpsichord Clearing House, and The Gregory E. Bulger Foundation.

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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