

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 12, 2012

CONTACT: Kathleen Fay, Executive Director | Boston Early Music Festival
161 First Street, Suite 202 | Cambridge, MA 02142
617-661-1812 | kathy@bemf.org | www.bemf.org



MEDIA ALERT: Boston Early Music Festival presents the acclaimed musicians of Tragicomedia in a program of Early Handel cantatas.

ARTIST: Tragicomedia (United States)

Stephen Stubbs, director, theorbo, & baroque guitar
Paul O'Dette, lute
Erin Headley, viola da gamba
Kristian Bezuidenhout, harpsichord

Shannon Mercer, soprano
Douglas Williams, bass-baritone

WHEN: Saturday, January 28, 2012 at 8pm
First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, 11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA

PROGRAM: *Early Handel Cantatas*

Barbara Strozzi: *Donna non sa che dice*
George Frideric Handel: *Filli adorata*
Francisco Guerau: *Espanoleta*
Handel: *No se emenderá jamás*
Handel: Allemande, from Suite Nr. 3 in D minor, HWV 428
Handel: Courante, from Suite Nr. 11 in D minor, HWV 437
Handel: Aria and Variations, from HWV 428
Agostino Steffani: *Tengo per infallibile*
Carlo Arrigoni: Sonata à Mandolino e Basso
Handel: *Sarai troppo felice*
Handel: *Col partir* (Aria from *Ah! Che pur troppo e vero*)
Handel: *Tacete, ohime, tacete*

TICKETS: Tickets priced at **\$19, \$38, \$49, and \$66** each and can be purchased at WWW.BEMF.ORG and **617-661-1812**; a \$5 discount for students, seniors, and groups is offered by calling 617-661-1812. Subscription discounts of 10% are available with the purchase of three or more programs.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

BEMF Artistic Co-Director Stephen Stubbs leads an unparalleled ensemble of instrumentalists featuring his fellow Artistic Co-Director Paul O'Dette on lute, Erin Headley on viola da gamba, and Kristian Bezuidenhout on harpsichord. They will be joined by two exceptional singers, soprano Shannon Mercer and bass-baritone Douglas Williams, in an enchanting evening of early Handel cantatas.

While Handel's oratorios are very well known today, and his operas increasingly revived, the large body of cantatas composed during his time in Italy are rarely heard. "The Italian cantata of the 17th and 18th centuries is one of the largest buried treasures of European musical history," remarks Stephen Stubbs. The cantatas were written to be performed in the private homes of aristocratic patrons and to showcase the dazzling virtuosity of some of the finest singers in the world. The program will also feature masterpieces by Handel's contemporaries and influences from his productive time in Italy.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

With its unique constellation of leading continuo and solo players, **Tragicomedia** has been an important influence in the field of early music since 1987, when Stephen Stubbs and Erin Headley co-founded the group. Their common interest was in rediscovering and realizing the musical riches of the basso continuo era. In 1600, Agostino Agazzari described the enormous palette of instrumental color—including lutes, chitarrones, harps, keyboards and lirones—necessary for the effective realization of an accompaniment. This—and "tragicomedia" as an important seventeenth-century genre and aesthetic principle representing dramatic contrast—was the inspiration for the group. In repertoire ranging from Monteverdi to Bach, Tragicomedia has explored every musical genre from lute song to fully-staged Baroque opera. Many of the group's recordings for EMI, Teldec, Virgin, Hyperion, and Harmonia Mundi USA have won prestigious prizes. Tragicomedia has been the continuo team for the Boston Early Music Festival since 1997 in productions of Cavalli, Rossi, Lully, Conradi, and Mattheson operas, and in for Vancouver Early Music's Monteverdi cycle.

RESOURCES:

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

The 2011–2012 Boston Early Music Festival 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.

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

#####