

Boston Early Music Festival

INTERNATIONAL BAROQUE OPERA • CELEBRATED CONCERTS • WORLD-FAMOUS EXHIBITION

Boston Early Music Festival
43 Thorndike Street, Suite 302
Cambridge, MA 02141-1764
617-661-1812 | www.BEMF.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 31, 2017

BEMF presents Vox Luminis in a program of vocal music by Scarlatti and Bach – Saturday, April 29 in Harvard Square.

ARTISTS: Vox Luminis (Belgium)
Lionel Meunier, *director*

WHEN: Saturday, April 29, 2017 at 8pm
St. Paul Church, Bow and Arrow Streets, Cambridge, MA

PROGRAM: Millesime 1685: Music of Scarlatti and Bach

Domenico Scarlatti: *Te Deum*
Johann Ludwig Bach: *Das ist meine Freude*
Johann Christoph Bach: *Der Mensch vom Weibe geboren*
Johann Sebastian Bach: *Jesu meine Freude*, BWV 227
Scarlatti: *Stabat Mater*

TICKETS: Tickets are priced at \$20, \$39, \$51, and \$70 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.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Gramophone Award-winning ensemble Vox Luminis has won acclaim the world over for their revelatory performances and recordings. These tight-knit musicians bring a combination of exquisite clarity and infectious passion to the vocal repertoire of the Baroque. Director Lionel Meunier leads ten young singers plus organ and viola da gamba in a program inspired by the year 1685, when two extraordinary composers—J. S. Bach and Domenico Scarlatti—were born. The program features Bach's ambitious funeral motet *Jesu, meine Freude*, BWV 227, Scarlatti's divine *Stabat Mater*, and works by other members of the Bach family.

Now best known for his keyboard works, Domenico Scarlatti was part of a musical tradition in which church music was an essential part of any composer's output. The best known of Scarlatti's sacred works is the *Stabat Mater* for ten voices and continuo. With those forces, one might expect a double choir or solo and *ripieno* texture, but Scarlatti treats the ten voices equally, creating a variety of contrasting textures to highlight the emotionally charged text.

Bach – Johann Sebastian, that is – is well known for his sacred vocal works, with his cantatas and passions generally recognized as the pinnacle of Baroque vocal polyphony. His eleven-movement motet *Jesu Meine Freude*—written for the mother-in-law of the Leipzig postmaster and featuring extracts from Paul's Letter to the Romans—demonstrates all the tricks in the polyphonist's book, with a magnificent choral fugue at its heart. While Johann Sebastian is the best known of the Bach family, they bred an incredible pool of talent. This program includes dramatic motets by two of Johann Sebastian's elder cousins, Johann Christoph and Johann Ludwig.

ASSOCIATED EVENTS:

There will be a Pre-Concert Talk at 7pm with Vox Luminis director Lionel Meunier, moderated by Michael Barrett, Lecturer in Music at the Boston University School of Music.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Vox Luminis, founded in 2004 in Namur, Belgium, is an ensemble specializing in the performance of 16th through 18th century vocal music. The majority of the group met at one of the most significant centers for early music in Europe: the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. Their seminal 2012 recording of Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* brought them to the forefront of the choral and early music world, winning several prestigious awards including *Gramophone's* Recording of the Year and the International Classical Music Award. Vox Luminis has performed in festivals and venues in Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Portugal, Croatia, and the US. The ensemble has been praised for its seamless blend of high-quality individual voices, exquisite tuning, and clarity of sound. After a performance on the acclaimed Miller Theater Early Music Series in February 2016, the *New York Times* called the group's program "revelatory," adding that the singers "blended beautifully."

Lionel Meunier has sung with numerous top ensembles in Europe such as Collegium Vocale Gent and the Amsterdam Baroque Choir. These experiences have given Meunier the opportunity to work with many of today's leading specialists including Ton Koopman, Philippe Herreweghe, Gustav Leonhardt, and Richard Egarr. Meunier drew on his broad wealth of vocal experience and collaboration to form the critically acclaimed vocal ensemble Vox Luminis in 2004, which is now his predominant musical focus. In recent seasons, Meunier has increasingly been in demand as a vocal soloist, coach, artistic leader, and conductor for ensembles throughout Europe. His thoughtful approach and passion for early and a cappella repertoire, coupled with his respect and innate understanding of singers, allows him gently to coax the highest possible standards from those with whom he collaborates.

RESOURCES:

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

BEMF's 2016–2017 Season Press Release: http://www.bemf.org/pages/press/052416_1617season.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-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 19th Boston Early Music Festival will take place from June 11–18, 2017, and feature 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**, Orchestra Director **Robert Mealy**, and Dance Director **Melinda Sullivan**.

The 2016–2017 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, Zuckermann Harpsichords International, 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.

####