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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



**THE BOSTON EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL
PRESENTS PURCELL'S *DIDO AND AENEAS*,
THE THIRD ANNUAL CHAMBER OPERA SERIES**

Cambridge, MA – November 16, 2010- The **Boston Early Music Festival** will present the third in its annual series of Baroque chamber operas, **Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas***, as part of its annual concert season on **Saturday, November 27, 2010 at 8pm** and **Sunday, November 28, 2010 at 3pm** at **New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall** (30 Gainsborough Street in Boston, MA). Tickets are priced at \$19, \$38, \$49, \$66, and \$125 are available through the Boston Early Music Festival at **617-661-1812** or at **WWW.BEMF.ORG**, as well as through the Jordan Hall Box Office located at 30 Gainsborough Street in Boston and by telephone at 617-585-1260.

Dido and Aeneas will be led by three-time Grammy-nominated **BEMF Artistic Co-Directors Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs**; along with **Stage Director Gilbert Blin**; **Costume Designer Anna Watkins**; and **Choreographer Melinda Sullivan**. Starring in the title role of *Dido* will be mezzo-soprano **Laura Pudwell**, who last appeared with BEMF in Claudio Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* at the 2009 Festival and was singled out for praise by *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, and others. Joining Ms. Pudwell, in the role of *Aeneas*, will be bass-baritone **Douglas Williams**, acclaimed for his "wide range and flexibility" (*Boston Musical Intelligencer*) for his performance as Polyphemus in BEMF's Chamber Opera production of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in 2009. Joining them will be a 13-member **BEMF Vocal Ensemble** featuring such Boston Early Music Festival favorites as **Yulia Van Doren** and **Teresa Wakim**, five dancers with the **BEMF Baroque Dance Ensemble** including Featured Baroque Dancers **Caroline Copeland** and **Carlos Fittante**, and the seven member **BEMF Chamber Ensemble**.

A familiar landmark in operatic history, **Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*** vividly recounts the famous story from Virgil's *Aeneid* with a libretto by Nahum Tate. The opera tells the story of the joyous love of Dido, Queen of Carthage, and the Trojan hero Aeneas—and their ill-fated separation, leading to Dido's famous dying lament. While the opera has enjoyed tremendous popularity in the past century, its early history is shrouded in mystery, though many musicologists speculate that it was first composed for the English royal court. The only piece of the original production to survive is a libretto from an early performance. The earliest copies of the score come at least 60 years after the work was composed, and lack the music for the original prologue as well as incidental music and dances indicated in the score.

BEMF Co-Musical Director Stephen Stubbs observes, "one could think of *Dido and Aeneas* as a noble torso, like the Venus de Milo, in need of some additions to create an impression of completeness." To fill in these gaps, Stubbs, along with Co-Musical Director Paul O'Dette and Stage Director Gilbert Blin, have personally researched and selected courtly odes and dances from the late 17th century by Purcell and others to fill in for the lost music, offering audiences a unique opportunity to experience the same scope of entertainment in the original production.

WHO: Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Opera Series

WHEN: Saturday, November 27, 2010 at 8pm
Sunday, November 28, 2010 at 3pm

WHERE: New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall, 30 Gainsborough Street, Boston, MA

PROGRAM: Henry Purcell: *Dido and Aeneas*

Paul O'Dette & Stephen Stubbs, *Musical Directors*
Gilbert Blin, *Stage Director*
Anna Watkins, *Costume Designer*
Melinda Sullivan, *Choreographer*

Laura Pudwell, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*
Douglas Williams, *Aeneas, Trojan Prince*
Yulia Van Doren, *Belinda, Dido's sister & Vocal Ensemble*
Teresa Wakim, *Second Woman, Lady in Waiting for Dido & Vocal Ensemble*
Brenna Wells, *First Witch/First Enchantress & Vocal Ensemble*
Carrie Henneman Shaw, *Second Witch/Second Enchantress & Vocal Ensemble*
Jose Lemos, *Spirit in form of Mercury & Vocal Ensemble*
Thea Lobo, *Vocal Ensemble*
Annie Rosen, *Vocal Ensemble*
Jason McStoots, *Sorceress & Vocal Ensemble*
Zachary Wilder, *Sailor & Vocal Ensemble*
Michael Barrett, *Vocal Ensemble*
Ulysses Thomas, *Vocal Ensemble*
John Proft, *Vocal Ensemble*
Olivier Laquerre, *Vocal Ensemble*

Caroline Copeland & Carlos Fittante, *Featured Baroque Dancers*
Justin Coates, Caitlin Klinger, and Alexis Silver, *BEMF Dance Ensemble*

Paul O'Dette, *Baroque guitar & theorbo*
Stephen Stubbs, *Baroque guitar & theorbo*
Robert Mealy, *violin I*
Cynthia Freivogel, *violin II*
Laura Jeppesen, *viola*
Phoebe Carrai, *'cello*
Avi Stein, *harpsichord*

TICKETS: Tickets priced at **\$19, \$38, \$49, \$66, and \$125** each can be purchased at **WWW.BEMF.ORG** and **617-661-1812**; a \$5 discount for students, seniors, and groups of 10 or more is offered by calling 617-661-1812. Subscription discounts of 10% are available with the purchase of three or more programs.

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

ABOUT THE BEMF CHAMBER OPERA SERIES:

In 2008, BEMF took this same level of musicianship and scholarship employed in their fully-staged Festival opera productions and directed it towards small-scale works with the introduction of the **BEMF Chamber Opera Series**. Each production would feature intimate staging with full costumes and elements of Baroque dance. The inaugural production in November 2008 paired Charpentier's *Actéon* with Blow's *Venus and Adonis*; both works are based on myths from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and tell stories of unfortunate hunters who cross paths with female deities and explore themes of transformation. Hailed by the *Boston Globe* as "vivid performances of two seldom-heard works" and "a highly welcome addition to the local concert calendar," BEMF offered an encore presentation at the June 2009 Festival, which the *Wall Street Journal* described as "charming...delightful...[and] especially poignant." Charpentier's *Actéon* was recorded for release as the fourth BEMF Opera CD and will be sold by BEMF at the performances of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Blow's *Venus and Adonis* is scheduled to be released as the fifth BEMF Opera CD in June 2011.

In 2009, BEMF offered a production of Handel's original 1718 chamber version of *Acis and Galatea* which *The Boston Globe* called "Musically impeccable." In the spring of 2011, this production will tour six cities across North America bringing the BEMF Chamber Opera Series to audiences in Seattle, Vancouver, Kansas City, and New York before returning for encore presentations at the June 2011 Festival in Boston and Great Barrington, MA.

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 fully staged operatic centerpiece of the 16th Festival and Exhibition in 2011 will be the North American premiere of **Agostino Steffani's *Niobe, Queen of Thebes*** led by BEMF Artistic Directors **Paul O'Dette** and **Stephen Stubbs**, and *Stage Director and Set Designer* **Gilbert Blin**. The international cast will include soprano **Amanda Forsythe** in the title role and countertenor **Philippe Jaroussky** as *Anfione*.

The 2010–2011 Boston Early Music Festival concert season is presented with support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, National Endowment for the Arts, ConstellationCenter, WGBH Radio Boston, Harpsichord Clearing House, Zuckermann Harpsichords International, The Gregory E. Bulger Foundation, and U. S. Trust/Bank of America Private Wealth Management.

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

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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