

EARLY MUSIC
FOUNDATION

PRESENTS

THE 2002/2003 NYC
SUBSCRIPTION SERIES

EARLY MUSIC
NEW YORK
FREDERICK RENZ
DIRECTOR

SINGERS

Eric S. Brenner	alto	Steven Laplante	alto
Oliver Brewer	tenor	Staffan Kryjcir-Liljas	alto & bass
Scot Cameron	haute contre	Gregory Purnhagen	baritone
Joe Damon Chappel	bass baritone	Dan Scarozza	alto
Todd Frizzell	tenor	Jon Szabo	bass baritone
Grant Herreid	haute contre	David Vanderwal	tenor

VIOLIN CONSORT

Christine Gummery	cello
Peter Kupfer	violin/viola
Robert Seletsky	violin
Alissa Smith	viola

TROMBONE CONSORT

Lisa Albrecht	tenor trombone
Greg Ingles	tenor trombone
Eric Schmalz	tenor trombone
Mack Ramsey	bass trombone

BASSO CONTINUO

Grant Herreid	lute & theorbo
Gary Hess	theorbo
Christa Patton	triple harp
James Smith	theorbo

MONTEVERDI

Early 17th Century Concertato Style, 1600-1650

Saturday, March 1, 2003 at 8 PM
Saint Vincent Ferrer Church
Lexington Avenue at 66th Street
New York City

MONTEVERDI
Early 17th Century Concertato Style, 1600-1650

PROGRAM

Sonata Quinta "La Schilina" <i>Sonate a quattro, sei, et otto...</i>	Cesario Gussago 1608
Messa "La vaga pastorella," <i>Selva morale e spirituale,</i> Kyrie Gloria in excelsis	Claudio Monteverdi 1641
Credidi a 8 voci da capella <i>Selva morale</i>	Monteverdi
Messa "La vaga pastorella," Credo [alternate, <i>seconda prattica</i> movements] Crucifixus a quatro voci Et resurrexit a due tenori con due violini Et iterum venturus est a 3 voci con quarto tromboni	Monteverdi
In te Domini, speravi, alto solo con violino e trombone <i>Symphoniae sacrae I, 1629</i>	Heinrich Schütz 1585-1672
Sonata a due violini et trombono <i>Sonate concertate, Libro II, 1629</i>	Dario Castello fl. c.1625
Freuet euch des Herren, a 3 voci con due violini <i>Symphonia Sacrae II, 1647</i>	Schütz
Sonata Decima Ottava, "La Porcellaga," a 8 <i>Sonate a quattro, sei, et otto...</i> , 1608	Gussago

Intermission

Canzona "La Monteverde" <i>Canzoni a quattro voci...con ogni sorti de strumenti, Libro Primo, 1615</i>	Tarquinio Merula c.1594-1665
Spuntava il dì, canzonetta morale a 3 voci <i>Selva morale</i> Prima parte: Spuntava il dì Seconda parte: La più dolce ruggiada Terza parte: La vagheggiano gli alberi Quarta parte: Per Valletta o per campagna Quinta, et ultima parte: Ahi! quel sole	Monteverdi
Chi vol che m'innamori, canzon morale a 3 con due violini <i>Selva morale</i> Ritornello [primi] per la canzonetta Chi vol Ritornello secondo che serve per la fine dela detta canzonetta	Monteverdi
Sonata sopra l'aria della romanesca <i>Libro III, 1623</i>	Salomone Rossi c.1570-ca1630
Fili mi, Absalon, bass solo con 4 Tromboni <i>Symphoniae sacrae I, 1629</i>	Schütz
Passacalio <i>Diversi generi de sonate, da chiesa, e da camera...Opus 22, 1655</i>	Biagio Marini 1587-1663
Laudate Dominum, voce solo tenore	Monteverdi
Voi ch'ascoltate, madrigale morale a 5 con due violini <i>Selva morale</i>	Monteverdi

PROGRAM NOTES

The music on tonight's program comes from an epoch of burgeoning Italian artistic imagination and expressivity perhaps unparalleled even in Italy's illustrious history. Yet simultaneously, Italy was under the tyrannical control of both the aristocracy and especially the monolithic Inquisition, which crushed all plurality in action or thought. It was during this period that Galileo was imprisoned by the Inquisition for espousing Copernican theory. Inquisitorial authoritarianism even affected Claudio Monteverdi, the principal composer on this program, when his younger son (a medical student) was arrested in Mantua during 1627 for reading prohibited literature. Monteverdi, by then a famous composer working in Venice, sold the necklace received from Duchess Caterina de Medici for dedicating his 1619 *Seventh Book of Madrigals* to her, so he could bail out his son. Artists were completely dependent on capricious and oppressive systems of aristocratic and ecclesiastical patronage. Despite, or perhaps owing to, such potentially stifling conditions, seldom was there a period in the arts when human passion and experience were expressed with such immediacy.

At the turn of the sixteenth century, art music was governed by rules of structure and polyphony as codified by Zarlino in his 1558 *Istituzioni*, and by the precepts of Plato and Aristotle as selectively interpreted by the Church; neither sacred nor secular vocal music had much direct expressive interaction with the text. But toward the end of the sixteenth century, poets and musicians became interested in ways of declaiming Greek tragedy; at first experimentally, music became not merely a neutral accompaniment of text, but an active participant with it. Polyphony was augmented by unprepared dissonances, new harmonic colors, and evocative vocal figures, all designed to represent the human passions animating the text. Such practices were not entirely new: simpler forms were heard in the "madrigalisms" of previous secular vocal music, notably in the "mannerist" style of Marenzio. In the new style, however, these elements were expanded with a hitherto unknown sophistication, inventiveness, and psychological intensity; the dramatic solo scenes known as monodies, and the complex intertwining of art forms known as opera (literally, "works") were the most obvious results. The older aesthetic came to be known as *prima prattica*—"first practice," and the newer one, as *seconda prattica*. In a sense, the *seconda prattica* is a musical flowering of humanism in a largely anti-humanistic environment. The merits of the two practices precipitated heated discourses, most famous among them the published Artusi-Monteverdi debates, where the old-school canon Artusi took the moderns to task for abandoning Zarlino's system that boasted roots in the doctrines of Plato. Monteverdi responded that evaluations based on *prima prattica* ideologies were inapplicable to *seconda prattica* aesthetics. The *seconda prattica* even found its way into sacred music, where texts were set in new ways that made them immediate and gripping. Most fascinating of all, because human passions in sung text were associated with recognizable harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic patterns, narrative emotive intent became, paradoxically, effective in purely instrumental music.

The newer practice did not supplant the earlier one, as various historical precedents might lead one to suppose. On the contrary, Monteverdi, often seen as emblematic of the *seconda prattica*, successfully combined the two styles with an almost glib facility as his needs dictated, often within the same work. The sacred music performed here contains examples of precisely such fluid juxtapositions: in the 1641 *Selva morale e spirituale*—a 25-year compendium of his Venetian sacred music, strict *prima prattica* mass setting movements alternate with emotionally charged

seconda prattica pieces like “Crucifixus.” In the 1641 “Laudate Dominum,” modeled on his 1632 madrigal “Zefiro torna,” the vocal part unfolds over a continuously repeating bass pattern – the *ciacona* in this instance, a compositional device popular throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Heinrich Schütz studied in Venice with Gabrieli from 1610 to 1611, and in 1628 with Monteverdi, taking back to Germany the essential ingredients of the *seconda prattica* and applying it to his generally sacred output, both in Latin and his vernacular German. Schütz’ earlier *Symphoniae Sacrae*, op. 6, two of which are performed tonight, were published in Venice during 1629; scored for diverse voices and instruments, they are at least as brilliant and emotionally arresting as any *seconda prattica* works by native northern Italian composers. Indeed, “Fili mi, Absalon,” biblical King Saul’s despairing cry at his renegade son’s death, exhibits a wrenching, operatic, emotional breadth.

Dario Castello’s “Sonata for two violins, trombone, and *continuo*” in his second book of instrumental works (1629), is cast, typically, as a single multi-sectional movement, alternating concerted earlier-style segments with episodes of *virtuoso* expressivity. It must be added that instrumental *bravura*, often erroneously attributed to the more personal, soloistic character of the *seconda prattica*, constitutes a separate matter entirely: music in other styles could be as heavily decorated, technically stunning, and improvisatory. In *seconda prattica* style however, improvised figuration, however florid, must be textually evocative and expressive, reinforcing the work’s humanity and drama. A beautiful example of impassioned, but minimally adorned, *seconda prattica* instrumental music, heard here, is Biagio Marini’s *Passacalio* from his 1655 collection, op. 22, a ground-bass piece like Monteverdi’s 1641 “Laudate Dominum.” The scoring of the *Passacalio* is forward-looking, containing only one viola part rather than the two customary for the period.

Cesario Gussago’s 1608 *Sonatas* (perhaps the first use of the term), in sharp contrast, are strictly *prima prattica*, and display the antiphonal instrumental groupings typical of Giovanni Gabrieli, though less contrapuntal. The canzona “La Monteverde” by Tarquinio Merula, from his 1615 *Libro Primo* published in Venice, is also written in an older style. Although its dense four-part polyphony is typical of viol-consort music, the choice of instrumentation is optional, violin family instruments capturing the Italian musical imagination by this period. The title apparently honors Monteverdi, perhaps reinforcing his renown for compositions in both earlier and modern styles.

Salamone Rossi was the best and most renowned Jewish composer until at least the nineteenth century; his sister, known as Madame Europa, was the only professional female Jewish singer of her day. Rossi worked in Mantua (overlapping with Monteverdi’s often undervalued employment there until 1612); his reputation led to a ducal decree permitting him to shed the yellow badge imposed on Jews in much of Italy and elsewhere in Europe. Like Monteverdi, Rossi worked in conservative as well as modern styles. His most expressive music appears in his *canzonette* and trio sonatas, the origin of the latter form often ascribed to Rossi. Like the “Sonata sopra l’aria della Romanesca” on the present program, drawn from his third book of instrumental works (1623), a number of Rossi’s trio sonatas are ground-bass pieces. Rossi’s last publication is dated 1628; he probably died in 1630 either during the destruction of the ghetto or the plague that followed the siege of Mantua.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Frederick Renz, founder and director of the Early Music Foundation (EMF), is a unique figure in the early music movement. Equally adept in all forms of music and music-drama from the 11th to the 18th centuries, he has reaped international acclaim for his work as conductor, producer, director and performer while leading New York's **ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY MUSIC** and New York's **GRANDE BANDE** to preeminence in the field.

Frederick Renz studied harpsichord with Gustav Leonhardt in Holland as a Fulbright Scholar. He was keyboard soloist with the legendary New York Pro Musica for six seasons and founded the Early Music Foundation when the Pro Musica disbanded in 1974. Mr. Renz directs New York's **ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY MUSIC** and **GRANDE BANDE** in an annual New York season and on regular tours throughout the United States and abroad.

For his pioneering work in the genre of medieval music-drama, Renz has received numerous accolades including commissions from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (*The Play of Mary Magdalene*, *The Resurrection Play of Tours* and *The Raising of Lazarus/Conversion of St. Paul; Sponsus: The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins*), Spoleto Festival USA (*Herod and the Innocents*) and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (*The Play of St. Nicholas* and *Daniel and the Lions*). Frederick Renz has also received two Producers Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts' Opera/Musical Theater Program and a grant from the Ingram Merrill Foundation.

A noted harpsichordist, Frederick Renz has given numerous solo recitals, appeared with orchestras and chamber groups in New York, and has recorded for Lyricord, Foné, Decca, Vanguard, Musical Heritage Society, Musicmasters and Nonesuch. As an educator, Renz has served as Visiting Professor and Artistic Consultant for the Fundacion del Estado para la Orquesta Nacional Juvenil (Venezuela), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Oklahoma, the Athens Festival and the Tokyo Summer Festival. In 2002, Frederick Renz was awarded an honorary Doctor of Music degree conferred by the State University of New York (SUNY).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Lisa Albrecht is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, having studied with John Marcellus. In 1986 she joined the San Antonio Symphony and subsequently performed and toured with orchestras worldwide, including the St. Louis Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Santa Fe Opera, St. Petersburg Symphony, and the NY Philharmonic. As a freelance artist, she performs at Lincoln Center, on Broadway, and records for television, radio, and film. She plays sackbut with the Collegium Musicum and in chamber recitals. As recitalist & clinician, Ms. Albrecht was soloist at the International Trombone Festival and Eastern Trombone Workshop.

Eric S. Brenner, countertenor, has been singing with Toby Twining Music since premiering his "Chrysalid Requiem" in Amsterdam three years ago (CD released by Cantaloupe Music earlier this year). Praised for his "soft, otherworldly tone" (Anne Midgette - New York Times), Eric has been a featured soloist with the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, the Dennis Keene Choral Festival,

Rockland Camerata, and the New York City Gay Men's Chorus at Carnegie Hall. Recent appearances include the Bard Music Festival, Voices of Ascension, and New York Collegium.

Oliver Brewer, tenor, recently began his singing career after finishing graduate work at the Eastman School of Music. Credits there included leading roles in opera and oratorio and opportunity for study and performance of early music. He has appeared with the Pacific Music Festival Baroque Ensemble, The Publick Music, Rochester Oratorio Society, and the Lexington Philharmonic. In 1997, he completed extensive research on modern interpretations of Gregorian chant and his studies of early music will continued this summer in Norway at the Ringve Academy in Trondheim.

Scot Cameron, tenor/countertenor, has spent the past ten years performing throughout the US and abroad, including Israel, Latvia, Spain, France, England, Taiwan and Singapore. Recent performances include Concert Royale, Fort Worth Dallas Ballet, Hallelujah Oratorio Society in Singapore, Dallas Bach Society, and the Orchestra of New Spain. Mr. Cameron has also performed with the Orquesta Sinfonica y Coro de Radio Television Espanola en Madrid, and the Fort Worth Symphony and was featured on the recently released Dorian recording, *Madrid 1752, "Sacred Music from the Chapel of Spain."*

Joe Damon Chappel, bass, is a native of Nashville, Tennessee. In 1994, he graduated from the Eastman School of Music, where he was a William Warfield scholar and studied with Carol Webber. He is the principal bass soloist with Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity. He also has sung for Bachworks and other ensembles in the city that perform Oratorio, cantatas and sacred music. Recently, Mr. Chappel sang with the 2001 Piccolo Spoleto music festival as the bass soloist in the world premiere of Dan Locklair's *A Dubose Heyward Triptych*. He is currently a student of Gary Kendall.

Todd Frizzell, tenor, recently sang with the New York Virtuoso Singers, the New York Concert Singers, Musica Antica, and the Grove Street Singers. A regular member of New York's Ensemble for Early Music since 1995, he has serenaded Dame Judi Dench at Broadway's Ethyl Barrymore Theater, sung the tenor solos in Händel's *Israel in Egypt* at Avery Fischer Hall with The National Chorale and is a featured soloist in a new CD, *Responsoria*, recorded with the choir of the church of St. Luke in the Fields, where he is also a frequent recitalist. Todd is a member of the Western Wind vocal ensemble

Christine Gummere, cello, born in Barrytown, N.Y., and educated in Manhattan, has been an active performer in N.Y.C. since 1977. Her versatility as a musician has led to performances in styles as diverse as French, German and Italian baroque on period instruments, contemporary orchestral music with Concordia and the Riverside Symphony (where she was principal cello for 19 years), and the swing music of String Fever. She has also performed Off-Broadway, as solo on-stage cellist, in productions for the New York Shakespeare Festival, The Classic Stage Company, The Music Theater Group; and for the performance artist John Kelly.

Grant Herreid, lute, theorbo, cittern, is a versatile musician/director/teacher on the early music scene. As a multi-instrumentalist and singer he performs frequently with Hesperus, Piffaro, My Lord Chamberlain's Consort, Artek and New York City Opera. He teaches at Mannes College of Music in New York and directs the New York Continuo Collective. Grant has created and

directed several theatrical shows and explores the unwritten traditions of early Renaissance music with the group Ex Umbris. He has recorded for Archiv, Dorian, Koch, Lyrichord, Musical Heritage Society and Newport Classics, among others.

Gary Hess, theorbo, received his earliest musical training on the trombone; he has since studied music theory and performance at Mannes College, Duke University, the University of North Carolina, Berklee College, and various international workshops. Having a strong interest in music of the Renaissance & Baroque eras he has since appeared as a lutenist in New York with the Mannes Camerata, Clarion Consort, Ciacona, Accademia Testudine and the Continuo Collective. He has also sung with the choirs of St. Luke in the Fields, St. Mary the Virgin, St. Francis of Assisi and Church of the Resurrection.

Greg Ingles (sackbut) received his Bachelor of Music degree in trombone performance from Oberlin Conservatory. He is in demand as a freelance sackbut player performing with such period instrument ensembles as Tafelmusik, New York Collegium, Concerto Palatino, Trinity Consort, American Bach Soloists, Orchestra of the Renaissance, Violins of Lafayette, Ensemble Rebel, Boston Shawm & Sackbut Ensemble, San Francisco Bach Choir and Artek. As a member of Piffaro, he has recorded on the Dorian label. Greg is currently completing doctoral work at SUNY, Stony Brook and is professor of trombone at Hofstra University.

Staffan Kryjcir-Liljas (bass & alto) recently moved to NYC from Stockholm, Sweden where he performed with the ensembles Scala Jacobi (medieval) and La Serenissima (renaissance). He has appeared as a soloist throughout Scandinavia, performing baroque as well as contemporary music by composers like Veljo Tormis and Arvo Pärt, and is featured on the CD "Autumn Landscapes," recorded with the KFUM Chamber Choir. In New York he has sung with a number of ensembles, including the Vox Vocal Ensemble, and most recently with the choir of St. Luke in the Fields.

Peter Kupfer, violin/viola, has performed and recorded with many of the period instrument ensembles in North America, including American Bach Soloists, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Handel & Haydn Society Orchestra, Apollo's Fire, the New York Collegium, Violins of Lafayette, and Tafelmusik. Festival appearances include Maggio Musicale Festival in Florence, Italy, Edinburgh Festival, Aston Magna, Connecticut Early Music Festival, and the Basically Bach Festival at St. Peters in NYC where he performed a solo recital of the Biber *Mystery Sonatas*. He is concertmaster for *Vespers with Bach* at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

Steven Laplante, alto, received a Master of Music degree from McGill University, Montreal. He has presented himself on several occasions in solo recitals in his native country of Canada and on choral tours of Europe. Mr. Laplante is Director of Music Ministries at St. Athanasius Church in Brooklyn. This is Mr. Laplante's second appearance with New York's Ensemble for Early Music.

Christa Patton, originally trained as an oboist, has since turned to other wind as well as stringed instruments. She has performed medieval and Renaissance music throughout the U.S., Europe and Japan with New York's Ensemble for Early Music, Piffaro, Clarion Music Society and Ex Umbris. As a baroque harpist, Christa has performed with, Artek, Wolf Trap Opera Company, and the New York City Opera. As a Fulbright grant recipient, Christa is presently

studying baroque harp in Milan, Italy with harpist Mara Galassi. She has recorded for the Lyrichord, Helicon and Dorian labels.

Gregory Purnhagen, baritone, has appeared to acclaim in a diverse range of repertoire spanning the 16th through 21st centuries. A favorite among New Music composers, he has worked extensively with Philip Glass, premiering roles in *“La Belle et la Bete”* and *“Monsters of Grace”*, as well as recording several works. He has appeared as a soloist with Musica Sacra, Music in a Sacred Space, the Dessoff Choirs, the Locrian Ensemble, Pro Arte Singers and Goliard. Recent engagements have included Lincoln Center Festival 2000, the Bard Music Festival and an evening of Philip Glass’ songs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Mack Ramsey, sackbut. With a love of 16th and 17th century repertoire that has led to a 30 year career as a specialist on wind instruments of this period, Mr. Ramsey is a founding member of the Boston Shawm & Sackbut Ensemble and has appeared with other ensembles such as Piffaro, Les Sonneurs de Montreal, Boston Camerata, Folger Consort, and The Whole Noyse, recording for Deutsche Grammophon, Telarc, Dorian, Electra, Erato and MHS. Overseas, he has appeared and recorded with the Taverner Players and the Gabrieli Consort. He also performs on baroque and classical trombone with period orchestras.

Robert Seletsky, violin, has been music director of NYS Baroque, principal violinist for New York’s Grande Bande, Glimmerglass/BAM production of Monteverdi opera, and the Florida Grand Opera using his new instrumental reconstruction. As principal violinist/soloist, he has also performed with American Bach/Classical Soloists, Barockorchester Stuttgart, Ravinia, Hong Kong, Berkeley, Connecticut, and Maplewood festivals. He has recorded for Music Masters, Koch, Chesky. An authority on string-instrument bows, improvisation, Maria Callas, Dr. Seletsky’s scholarly publications appear in *Revised New Grove*, *Early Music*, *New Harvard Dictionary*, *Opera Quarterly*, *Sirmen’s Violin Concerti* (RRMCE edition), and elsewhere.

Daniel Scarozza, alto, received extensive musical training as a boy chorister at St. Paul's Cathedral, Buffalo, New York. In 1996, Daniel was appointed an alto lay clerk at Ely Cathedral in England, becoming the first American to sing with the choir. He has been featured as a soloist in works of Handel, Bach, Charpentier and Britten. He currently sings with the Men & Boys choir at St. Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue as well as with many small ensembles based in New York City. Tonight's performance marks Daniel's debut with New York’s Ensemble for Early Music.

Erik Schmalz, sackbut, has recently begun studies in early music. After receiving degrees in trombone performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, he began a career as an orchestral trombonist performing with such ensembles as the Columbus (OH) Symphony, the Honolulu (HI) Symphony and the Atlantic (NY) Philharmonic. Erik has studied with sackbut specialists Wim Becu and Stewart Carter at the Amherst Early Music Festival. Currently he is a freelance performer on early trombone and will perform with the New York Collegium, Piffaro, and I Furiosi this season.

Alissa Smith, viola, holds music degrees from the Australian National University and the Julliard School. Her five-year tenure as violist of the Canberra String Quartet included recitals

at Carnegie Hall, the Gardner Museum in Boston, and the Berkshire Chamber Music Series; performances at the Park City, Aspen, Bravo! Colorado, and Steamboat Springs music festivals; and a residency with the Emerson String Quartet at the Hartt School of Music. As a baroque violist, Ms. Smith performs with Concert Royal, Philomel in Philadelphia, Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra and Apollo's Fire in Cleveland.

James W. Smith Jr., theorbo, is currently a D.M.A. student in Early Music Performance at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He holds an M. A. degree in Music History and Literature from Long Island University. He is a member of the New York Continuo Collective. James was the featured *chitaronne* player in the SUNY Stony Brook production of Monteverdi's *L'incoronation di Poppea*. He is a Teaching Artist from the Tilles Center's Arts and Culture Institute, an aesthetically based outreach program in the Nassau and Suffolk County public schools.

Jon Szabo, baritone, was a Resident Artist of the EEM from 1994 through 2001, both in concert and in the Ensemble's liturgical dramas. Recent solo appearances include area performances of Bach cantatas and Mendelssohn's "St. Paul." Jon has performed and/or recorded with Bach Works, NY Virtuosi, NY Concert Singers, Clarion Music Society and Ascension Music on the Delos and New World labels. He has also performed at Caramoor and the Boston Early Music Festival. Jon previously taught high school and college music and was a Resident Artist with the Toledo Opera Association. He is a founding member of Equal Voices vocal ensemble.

David Vanderwal, tenor, has been featured with the Seattle Baroque Orchestra, the Oregon Bach Festival Orchestra, Sacred Music for a Sacred Space and many other orchestras and choral societies. This year Mr. Vanderwal has performed with the Austin Symphony Orchestra and St. Thomas Church in NYC. He was a featured soloist for the Texas Bach Festival in Austin. He performed with the Portland Symphonic Choir, Westchester Oratorio Society and with the Masterworks Chorale and the American Bach Soloists. David has also appeared with such groups as the Western Wind, Four Nations Ensemble, Waverly Consort and the Folger Consort.

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1047 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10025-1798

Box Office Phone: 212-280-0330, Administrative Offices: 212-749-6600

E-mail: info@EarlyMusicNY.org, Website: www.EarlyMusicNY.org, Fax: 212-932-7348

Addendum (delete from program)



CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

(Born Cremona, Italy, 15 May 1567; Died Venice, 29 November 1643).

As a child, Monteverdi served as a boy chorister at the Cremona Cathedral, where he studied music with Marc' Antonio Ingegneri. In 1589 he traveled to Milan in hope of obtaining post as director of music at the Cathedral. In 1590, Monteverdi became a viol player and a madrigal singer at the court of Vincenzo Gonzaga. By 1592, he had issued a volume of three-part canzonettas and his first three volumes of madrigals., the Duke of Mantua, and in 1602, he assumed there the post of Maestro di Cappella. It was not until 1595, when he traveled to Vienna, Prague, and Whyserad in a campaign fighting the Turks, where he married Claudia Cattaneo, a singer at the court. Her premature death in 1607 left him with two infant sons. Between 1603 and 1605, Monteverdi had issued two more volumes of madrigals, and in 1607, he issued a volume of three-voice Scherzi musicali and his first opera, *La Favola d'Orfeo*. A year later, he completed a second opera, *Arianna*, of which only a single fragment had survived. In 1608, Monteverdi went to Cremona to be with his father. His father wrote to the Duke asking for his son to be honorably dismissed on the grounds of ill health and because of his poor salary. Monteverdi wrote an anguished letter on being summoned back to Mantua. His pay then increased. Through the rest of his life, Monteverdi served as Maestro di Cappella at the St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. Monteverdi died November 29, 1643, and was buried in church of Santa Maria Gloriosa del Frari.

He studied with Ingegneri, *maestro di cappella* at Cremona Cathedral, and published several books of motets and madrigals before going to Mantua in about 1591 to serve as a string player at the court of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga.

There he came under the influence of Giaches de Wert, whom he failed to succeed as *maestro di cappella* in 1596. In 1599 he married Claudia de Cattaneis, a court singer, who bore him three children, and two years later he was appointed *maestro di cappella* on Pallavicino's death. Largely as the result of a prolonged controversy with the theorist G.M. Artusi, Monteverdi became known as a leading exponent of the modern approach to harmony and text expression. In 1607 his first opera, *Orfeo*, was produced in Mantua, followed in 1608 by *Arianna*. Disenchanted with Mantua, he then returned to Cremona, but failed to secure his release from the Gonzaga family until 1612, when Duke Vincenzo died.

The dedication to Pope Paul V of a grand collection of church music known as the *Vespers* (1610) had already indicated an outwardlooking ambition, and in 1613 Monteverdi was appointed *maestro di cappella* at St. Mark's, Venice.



There Monteverdi was active in reorganizing and improving the cappella as well as writing music for it, but he was also able to accept commissions from elsewhere, including some from Mantua, for example the ballet *Tirsi e Clori* (1616) and an opera, *La finta pazza Licori* (1627, not performed, now lost). He seems to have been less active after circa 1629, but he was again in demand as an opera composer on the opening of public opera houses in Venice from 1637. In 1640 *Arianna* was revived, and in the following two years *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, *Le nozze d'Enea con Lavinia* (lost) and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* were given first performances. In 1643 he visited Cremona and died shortly after his return to Venice.

Monteverdi can be justly considered one of the most powerful figures in the history of music. Much of his development as a composer may be observed in the eight books of secular madrigals published between 1587 and 1638. The early books show his indebtedness to Marenzio in particular; the final one, *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi*, includes some pieces 'in genere rappresentativo' - *Il ballo delle ingrate*, the *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* and the *Lamento della ninfa* - which draw on Monteverdi's experience as an opera composer. A ninth book was issued posthumously in 1651.

Orfeo was the first opera to reveal the potential of this then novel genre; *Arianna* (of which only the famous lament survives) may well have been responsible for its survival. Monteverdi's last opera, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, though transmitted in not wholly reliable sources and including music by other men, is his greatest masterpiece and arguably the finest opera of the century. In the 1610 collection of sacred music Monteverdi displayed the multiplicity of styles that characterize this part of his output. The mass, written on themes from Gombert's motet *In illo tempore*, is a monument of the *prima prattica* or old style. At the other extreme the motets, written for virtuoso singers, are the most thorough-going exhibition of the modern style and the *seconda prattica*.