

Program

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| Virtuosi Italiani: The florid style of Monteverdi and Handel | |
| Zefiro torna | Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) |
| Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben? | Monteverdi |
| Quel sguardo sdegnosetto | Monteverdi |
| Si dolce è'l tormento | Monteverdi |
| Cento partite sopra passacagli | Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) |
| O come sei gentile | Monteverdi |
| Pur ti miro | Monteverdi |
| <i>**There will be a 10-minute intermission**</i> | |
| Quel fior che all'alba ride | George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) |
| Sonata No. 6, Op. 5 in A minor | Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762) |
| Adagio, Allegro assai, Grave, Allegro moderato | |
| Và speme infida | Handel |
| Per te lasciai la luce, from Da quel giorno fatale | Handel |
| Bella gloria in campo armato, from Solitudini care, amata liberta | Handel |
| No, di voi non vo' fidarmi | Handel |

Out of respect for the performers and those audience members around you, please turn all beepers, cell phones and watches to their silent mode. Thank you.

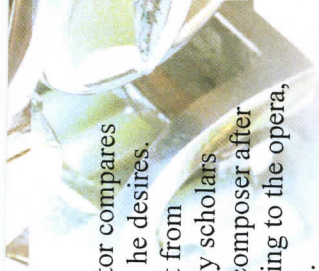
LES SIRÈNES

KATHRYN MUELLER, SOPRANO
KRISTEN WATSON, SOPRANO

MICHAEL SPONSELLER, HARPSICHORD
CORA SWENSON, CELLO

GUEST ARTIST CONCERT SERIES
ORGAN HALL
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2012 • 7:30PM

MUSIC



In Monteverdi's "**O come sei gentile**", the lovesick narrator compares himself to a little bird, eternally singing for the one whom he desires. We close the first half with "**Pur ti miro**," a luscious duet from Monteverdi's last opera, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Many scholars believe that this duet may have been added by a younger composer after Monteverdi's death, nevertheless it remains a glorious ending to the opera, piling suspension upon suspension to the listener's delight.

Just as Monteverdi surfaced as a giant of the early Baroque, so did George Frideric Handel achieve widespread acclaim for his contributions to the late Baroque. During Handel's youthful period in Rome he assimilated the Italian style that informs the works on our second half. Handel wrote "**Quel fior che all'alba ride**" shortly before *Messiah*. Certain passages of this duet were recycled and incorporated into the popular oratorio. Francesco Geminiani worked with Handel in London and at the Royal Court, and developed a heavily ornamented, florid style of playing. The **Sonata No. 6, Op. 5 in A minor** for cello and basso continuo opens with a short Adagio movement, setting the scene for a fiery Allegro assai, but in place of a full third movement is a series of chords simply marked Grave. The final Allegro moderato unfolds in an unusual, pseudo Rondo form in 3/8 meter with a charming, dance-like finale. Handel's "**Va speme infida**" explodes in a fury of echoes, expressing rage as the narrator speaks of banishing unfaithful hope. The tension momentarily breaks, until the opening theme returns to close the piece. The aria "**Per te lasciai la luce**" occurs midway through the solo cantata *Il delirio amoroso*, with an anguished solo cello line as Chloris pleads with Thyrsis to tell her why he has rejected her. Written during Handel's period in London, "**Bella gloria in campo armato**" from the cantata *Solitudini care*, *amata liberta* conveys a battleground theme as the narrator struggles to conquer his emotions. We close our program with the duet, "**No, di voi non vo' fidarmi**." The unrelenting coloratura passages seem to spin into eternity as the two sopranos team up against what they label as two tyrants: blind love and cruel beauty.

Acclaimed for their "exquisitely matched style and phrasing," **Les Sirènes** were finalists in Early Music America's 2012 Baroque Performance Competition. The Boston-based ensemble of duo sopranos and continuo takes audiences on an exploration of the soprano voice and the Baroque repertory, charming listeners with both fiery virtuosity and anguishing beauty. As soloists, the members of Les Sirènes have performed with American Bach Soloists, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Mark Morris Dance Group, Bach Collegium San Diego, and the Carmel Bach Festival. As Les Sirènes, they have appeared in Boston, Tucson, Brattleboro, VT, and at Trinity Wall Street in New York City. The group's 2012-2013 engagements include the San Francisco Early Music Society, Arizona Early Music Society, Phoenix Early Music Society, and Syracuse University. More info at www.lesirenesmusique.com.

Program Notes

Claudio Monteverdi, born in Cremona, Italy in 1567, emerged as a master of late Renaissance style and demonstrated great skill for setting texts dramatically in his music. The first half of our program draws entirely from his years in Venice, a prolific period of musical maturity, when he moved away from simple strophic settings and opened the door to the new style of the early Baroque. Our opening duet "**Zefiro torna**" is a chaconne, a form evolved from 16th century Spanish dance music. It employs a triple meter dance rhythm, a repetitive bass pattern only eight notes long, and highly ornamented vocal lines creating a continuous loop of variations. In "**Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben?**" the dramatic opening of a suspended minor second sets up the audience for the themes of agony and despair that permeate the poem. "**Quel sguardo sdegnosetto**" is a further example of Monteverdi's use of the chaconne; again, the bass remains almost identical in each verse but the melody varies as the piece develops. In "**Si dolce è'l tormento**" Monteverdi makes great use of the poetry with subtle phrasing and dissonance, at times emphasizing metrical displacement of the text to unique effect. Girolamo Frescobaldi, born in 1583 in Ferrara, Italy and a prolific organist of his time, became one of the first composers to treat the chaconne and passacaglia comparatively, and combines the two genres in the "**Centopartite sopra passacagli**."

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