FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Boston Early Music Festival releases
NINTH Baroque Opera CD, featuring two
chamber operas by Marc-Antoine Charpentier

Cambridge, MA – The Boston Early Music Festival has released its ninth Baroque opera recording, featuring two chamber operas by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, on the German label cpo (Classic Produktion Osnabrück). GRAMMY Award-winning Musical Directors Paul O’Dette and Stephen Stubbs lead the all-star Boston Early Music Festival Vocal and Chamber Ensembles in Charpentier’s Les Plaisirs de Versailles and Les Arts Florissants. Les Plaisirs de Versailles was featured in the BEMF Chamber Opera Series production of VERSAILLES: Portrait of a Royal Domain, first presented in November, 2016 in Boston and New York City in performances hailed as “vivacious” by The New York Times.

The Boston Early Music Festival has enjoyed a celebrated history with French operas of the 17th-Century, and especially the music of Charpentier. This release marks BEMF’s third recording exploring the Baroque master’s operatic repertoire, following the 2011 release of his Actéon and the 2014 release of La Descente d’Orphée aux Enfers and La Couronne de Fleurs. The later won the GRAMMY Award for Best Opera Recording and the ECHO Klassik Award for Opera Recording of the Year, 17th/18th Century. Both Les Plaisirs de Versailles and Les Arts Florissants depict allegorical scenes united in praise of King Louis XIV and his grand palace at Versailles.

In January of 2019, BEMF artists departed Boston for Bremen, Germany and the acoustically superb Sendesaal (former site of Radio Bremen) for thirteen days of rehearsal and recording. The disc features returning favorites soprano Teresa Wakim and baritone Jesse Blumberg alongside the BEMF recording début of mezzo-soprano Virginia Warnken. The stellar cast also includes Jason McStoots and GRAMMY-winner Aaron Sheehan, both alumni of BEMF’s GRAMMY-winning and GRAMMY-nominated recordings, as well as Margot Rood, Molly Netter, John Taylor Ward, and others. Concertmaster Robert Mealy leads the eleven-member BEMF Chamber Ensemble, while BEMF Opera Director Gilbert Blin serves as Drama Coach, and Kathleen Fay serves as Executive Producer for the CD.

ABOUT THE BEMF RECORDING PROJECT

With the goal of capturing the exceptional work of the Baroque Opera Project, BEMF initiated an effort to record its acclaimed Baroque Operas in 2005. This commitment to preservation has produced nine celebrated opera recordings and attracted the attention of the international community in the form of numerous awards and accolades, including a GRAMMY Award for Best Opera Recording for our 2014 CD release of Marc-Antoine Charpentier’s La Descente d’Orphée aux Enfers and La Couronne de Fleurs and four more GRAMMY nominations over 10 years. BEMF recordings have also been nominated for—and won—ECHO Klassik awards,
Gramophone awards, the Diapason d’Or de l’Année, and Gramophone Magazine’s Recording of the Month. The Recording Project was expanded to include nonoperatic Baroque vocal works, with recordings of the chamber duets of Agostino Steffani (2017) and Johann Sebastiani’s Matthäus Passion (2018). BEMF’s next CD—Handel’s first opera, Almira—will be released on the cpo label in late 2019.

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 Award-winning and four GRAMMY Award-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 21st Boston Early Music Festival will take place from June 6–13, 2021, and will feature the fully staged North American premiere of Henry Demarest’s Circé. 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.

Boston Early Music Festival is grateful for support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Constellation Charitable Foundation, WGBH Radio Boston, the Institut Français, as well as a number of generous foundations and individuals from around the world.

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

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