FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 4, 2019

Boston Early Music Festival presents La storia di Orfeo, with countertenor Philippe Jaroussky and soprano Amanda Forsythe – Friday, November 29, and Sunday, December 1, in Boston

ARTISTS: Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Ensemble
Philippe Jaroussky, countertenor
Amanda Forsythe, soprano
Paul O’Dette & Stephen Stubbs, Musical Directors
Robert Mealy, Concertmaster

Julie Andrijeski, violin; Sarah Darling, viola; Laura Jeppesen, viola; David Morris, lirone & viola da gamba; Douglas Balliett, violone; Paul O’Dette, chitarrone;
Stephen Stubbs, lute & Baroque guitar; Maxine Eilander, Baroque harp; Michael Sponseller, harpsichord

WHEN: Friday, November 29, 2019 at 8pm
Sunday, December 1, 2019 at 3pm
New England Conservatory’s Jordan Hall, 30 Gainsborough Street, Boston, MA

PROGRAM: La storia di Orfeo: Monteverdi • Sartorio • Rossi

Antonio Sartorio: Sinfonia to L’Orfeo
Monteverdi: Vi ricorda, o boschi ombrosi
Dario Castello: Sonata 15 from Sonate concertate...in stile moderno, Libro II

Rossi: Sinfonia from L’Orfeo
Sartorio: Cara e amabile catena

Claudio Monteverdi: Rosa del Ciel – Io non dirò
Luigi Rossi: Mio ben, teco il tormento
Rossi: Che dolcezza è la certezza
Rossi: Sinfonia from L’Orfeo
Monteverdi: Vi ricorda, o boschi ombrosi
Dario Castello: Sonata 15 from Sonate concertate...in stile moderno, Libro II
Rossi: M’ami tu?
Rossi: A l’imperio d’amore
Sartorio: Ahimè, Numi, son morta – Misero, oh Dio
Rossi: Lagrime, dove sete?
Biagio Marini: Passacalio from Sonate per ogni sorte di stromento musicale
Sartorio: È morta Euridice
Sartorio: Orfeo tu dormi? – Se desti pietà – Ferma, Euridice
Monteverdi: Sinfonia
Monteverdi: *Possente spirto*
Johann Rosenmüller: Sonata Settimà à 4 in D minor from *Sonatae a 2, 3, 4 e 5*
Agostino Steffani: *Se t'eclisse – Vive stele* from *Orlando*
Sartorio: *Numic he veggio*
Sartorio: *Chiuso, ahimè, di Cocito…Rendetemi Euridice*
Rossi: *Lasciate Averno*

**TICKETS:**
Tickets are priced at $25, $45, $55, $75 and $125 each, and can be purchased at [BEMF.org](http://BEMF.org) and **617-661-1812**; a $5 discount for students, seniors, and groups is available by calling 617-661-1812. Subscription discounts are available with the purchase of three or more programs on the 2019-2020 Season.

This program is part of a North American Tour with additional concert performances in Montréal (November 19), Seattle (November 22), Kansas City (November 24), and New York City (November 26).

**ABOUT THE PROGRAM:**
Orpheus, the divine musician who ventures to the underworld in a desperate bid to save his beloved Eurydice, has been an enduring source of inspiration for composers across the centuries. Superstar countertenor Philippe Jaroussky—alongside sublime soprano Amanda Forsythe—draws on three Italian Baroque operas to create a vivid pastiche of this tragic legend for the concert stage.

The maestro Orpheus himself, Mr. Jaroussky, created this program out of his passion for early Italian Baroque music. “The three operas focus on different aspects of the story: Sartorio and Rossi depict the happiness of the young lovers and the scene in which Eurydice is bitten by the snake; Monteverdi, on the other hand, concentrates more on Orpheus’s search for Eurydice in the underworld, and the highpoint of his work is an aria that has remained without parallel in the history of opera: the magical “Possente spirto,” which I have the temerity to perform here as a countertenor.”

For Renaissance poets, Orpheus symbolized the power of man’s creativity, derived from the expressive force of poetic language: the super-human singing of the demi-god, by means of which he is able to charm even death. As opera developed as a new art form in Florence, Orpheus was quickly adopted as a favorite subject. GRAMMY Award-winning Musical Directors Paul O’Dette and Stephen Stubbs lead timeless arias and duets by Claudio Monteverdi, Luigi Rossi, and Antonio Sartorio with these incomparable artists in a program also featuring instrumental interludes from other Baroque masters performed by the all-star BEMF Chamber Ensemble.

**ASSOCIATED EVENTS:**
There will be a pre-concert talk by Musical Directors Paul O’Dette and Stephen Stubbs one hour prior to each performance.

**ABOUT THE ARTISTS:**
Philippe Jaroussky has established himself as one of the major singers in the international musical scene, performing in the most prestigious festivals and concert halls around the world. An impressive mastery of vocal technique allows performances full of nuance and vocal
acrobatics. His vast repertoire of music the Baroque era ranges from the refinements of Monteverdi to the staggering brilliance of Handel and Vivaldi. He is also tirelessly at the forefront of musical research and has made strong contributions to the rediscovery of composers such as Caldara, Porpora, Steffani, and Cavalli. In 2002, he founded l’Ensemble Artaserse, which currently performs throughout the world. Already having an impressive discography, Philippe has been an exclusive artist with Erato-Warner Classics for many years and has received many awards for his recordings. Recently, a project dear to his heart came to fruition: The Academy Philippe Jaroussky, housed by La Seine Musicale in Boulogne-Billancourt, near Paris.

**Amanda Forsythe**, soprano, sang Euridice on BEMF’s 2015 Grammy-winning recording of Charpentier’s *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers*. She earned widespread acclaim for her album of Handel arias with Apollo’s Fire (Avie) and a recording of Gluck’s *Orfeo* (Erato) with Philippe Jaroussky. She performs regularly with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque, Tafelmusik, Handel and Haydn Society, Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, Apollo’s Fire, Les Talens Lyriques, and Boston Baroque. With the Boston Early Music Festival, she has performed in operas by Campra, Steffani, Pergolesi, Handel, Charpentier, and Monteverdi, many of which are available on recording. Forthcoming engagements include Pamina with the Komische Oper, Berlin, arias and Vivaldi’s *Gloria* with the Chicago Symphony, and Marzelline in *Fidelio* with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

**Paul O’Dette** has been described as “the clearest case of genius ever to touch his instrument” (Toronto Globe and Mail). He appears regularly at major festivals throughout the world performing lute recitals and in chamber music programs with leading early music colleagues. Mr. O’Dette has made more than 140 recordings, winning two GRAMMY Awards and receiving seven GRAMMY nominations and numerous international record awards. Together with Stephen Stubbs he won a GRAMMY as conductor in 2015 for Best Opera Recording, as well as an Echo Klassik Award, for their recording of Charpentier’s *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* with the Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Ensemble. In addition to his activities as a performer, Paul O’Dette is an avid researcher, having worked extensively on the performance of seventeenth-century Italian and English solo song, continuo practices, and lute repertoire. Paul O’Dette is Professor of Lute and Director of Early Music at the Eastman School of Music and Artistic Co-Director of the Boston Early Music Festival.

**Stephen Stubbs**, who won the GRAMMY Award as conductor for Best Opera Recording in 2015, spent a thirty-year career in Europe. He returned to his native Seattle in 2006 as one of the world’s most respected lutenists, conductors, and Baroque opera specialists. In 2007 Stephen established his new production company, Pacific MusicWorks (PMW), based in Seattle, reflecting his lifelong interest in both early music and contemporary performance. Stephen Stubbs is also the Boston Early Music Festival’s Artistic Co-Director along with his long-time colleague Paul O’Dette. In addition to his ongoing commitments to PMW and BEMF, recent appearances have included Handel’s *Amadigi* for Opera UCLA, Mozart’s *Magic Flute* and *Così fan tutte* in Hawaii, Handel’s *Agrippina* and *Semele* for Opera Omaha, Cavalli’s *Calisto* and Rameau’s *Hippolyte et Aricie* for Juilliard, and Mozart’s *Il re pastore* for the Merola program in San Francisco. His extensive discography as conductor and solo lutenist includes well over 100 CDs, many of which have received international acclaim and awards.
Robert Mealy is one of America’s most prominent Baroque violinists. He is concertmaster and Orchestra Director for the Boston Early Music Festival, where he has led this distinguished ensemble in festival productions, international tours, and recordings of a wide variety of repertoire for over a decade. A devoted chamber musician, he co-directs Quicksilver, whose recordings and festival appearances across America have received much critical acclaim. As principal concertmaster for the Grammy-nominated orchestra of Trinity Wall Street, he has performed all of Bach’s sacred works and is now embarked on a similar traversal of Handel’s oratorios. In January 2018 he made his Carnegie recital début as a soloist. A keen scholar as well as a performer, Mr. Mealy is Director of the distinguished Historical Performance Program at The Juilliard School. In 2004, he received Early Music America’s Binkley Award for outstanding teaching and scholarship. He still likes to practice.

RESOURCES:

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 – themed A Celebration of Women in the Arts – will take place from June 6–13, 2021, and feature the fully staged North American premiere of Henry Desmarest’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.

The 2019-2020 Boston Early Music Festival Concert Series is presented with support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Constellation Charitable Foundation, and WGBH Radio Boston, as well as a number of generous foundations and individuals from around the world.

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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