FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Boston Early Music Festival announces four streaming broadcasts for a virtual fall season

Cambridge, MA – The Boston Early Music Festival is pleased to announce a series of four virtual events for this fall. Originally scheduled for our in-person season, two beloved ensembles, Nevermind and The Tallis Scholars, will create unique performances that audiences can enjoy in their own homes. These events complement the previously announced Thanksgiving weekend lineup from the GRAMMY Award–winning BEMF Chamber Opera Series, “Looking Back at Orpheus,” featuring performances of two chamber opera productions inspired by the Orpheus legend. All four broadcasts will be presented free of charge for a limited time on BEMF’s YouTube channel (youtube.com/bostonearly/).

The Fall 2020 Virtual Season begins on Friday, October 16, 2020 at 8pm with the young French ensemble Nevermind. Hailed as a “breath of fresh air in the field of early music” (Wales Arts Review), these four friends met while studying in Paris and recognized their shared passions and vibrant musicianship. Following their highly successful BEMF début at the 2017 Festival, Nevermind returns this fall from the historic Rosario monastery in the heart of the Belgian countryside, with a delightful program of chamber music by Marias, Telemann, and J. S. Bach, including selections from The Art of Fugue.

The Thanksgiving Weekend streaming event "Looking Back at Orpheus" features the June 2015 performance of Monteverdi’s Orfeo broadcast on Friday, November 27, 2020 at 8pm and the November 2011 performance of Charpentier’s La Descente d’Orphée aux Enfers and La Couronne de Fleurs broadcast on Sunday, November 29, 2020 at 3pm, both from the BEMF Chamber Opera Series. This will be the first time the Boston Early Music Festival has publicly shared complete archival video of their critically acclaimed productions. These broadcasts will follow a two-week marathon of new video content created for this special event, including documentaries on the making of each production, video talks, and a 30-minute excerpt from BEMF’s 2017 fully-staged production of Campra’s Le Carnaval de Venise, featuring an Orpheus-themed “opera-within-an-opera” attended by the characters of the larger story.

The productions are led by BEMF’s GRAMMY Award–winning Musical Directors Paul O’Dette and Stephen Stubbs, Stage Director Gilbert Blin, Concertmaster Robert Mealy, and Choreographer Melinda Sullivan, and feature the all-star BEMF Vocal and Chamber Ensembles with gorgeous costumes designed by Anna Watkins. GRAMMY Award–winning tenor Aaron Sheehan has the distinction of playing the role of Orpheus in both Chamber Opera productions as well as in the excerpt from Campra’s Le Carnaval de Venise. In
Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*, Sheehan leads an outstanding cast featuring Mireille Asselin (Euridice), GRAMMY-nominee Teresa Wakim (Proserpina), bass-baritone Matthew Brook (Charon), and baritone Marco Bussi (Plutone), alongside dancer Carlos Fittante and 18 instrumentalists from the BEMF Chamber Ensemble and Dark Horse Consort. For the Charpentier, a cast of 9 singers is joined by 4 Baroque dancers and 10 instrumentalists of the BEMF Chamber Ensemble. The broadcasts feature videography by Kathy Wittman of Ball Square Films with audio from WCRB Classical Radio Boston (Monteverdi) and Sound Engineer Frank Cunningham (Charpentier). Each broadcast will remain available until Thursday, December 10, 2020.

The legendary voices of *The Tallis Scholars* have been a Boston Early Music Festival tradition for 31 consecutive seasons, and 2020 will be no exception. Coming to BEMF from London's historic Church of St. Anne & St. Agnes, director Peter Phillips leads music for the Christmas season written to invoke and honor the Virgin Mary, with selections by Palestrina, Lassus, Whyte, Pärt, Guerrero, and Praetorius. The program will be broadcast on *Friday, December 11, 2020 at 8pm*, and will be available through Christmas day.

BEMF is committed to compensating the dozens of singers, instrumentalists, dancers, and directors who will bring these unique programs to life, both newly recorded and archival. While these four events will be offered free of charge, donations are encouraged and deeply appreciated. Patrons can visit [BEMF.org/support](http://BEMF.org/support) to learn more about making a tax-deductible contribution to BEMF.

**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* 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 five 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 weeklong Festival and Exhibition recognized as the “world’s leading festival of early music” (*The Times*, London). 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 Boston Early Music Festival is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Constellation Charitable Foundation, and WCRB Classical Radio Boston, as well as a number of generous foundations and individuals from around the world.

For more information, please contact Kathleen Fay at kathy@bemf.org.
BEMF FALL 2020 CALENDAR

All events are free of charge and broadcast online at youtube.com/bostonearly/

Nevermind
Anna Besson, flute; Louis Creac'h, violin; Robin Pharo, viola da gamba; Jean Rondeau, harpsichord

The Art of Fugue
Premieres Friday, October 16, 2020 at 8pm EDT
Available until Friday, October 30, 2020 at 11:59pm EDT

BEMF Chamber Opera Series: Looking Back at Orpheus
Paul O’Dette & Stephen Stubbs, Musical Directors; Gilbert Blin, Stage Director;
Robert Mealy, Concertmaster; Melinda Sullivan, Dance Director

Charpentier’s La Descent d’Orphee aux Enfer & La Couronne de Fleurs
Premieres Friday, November 27, 2020 at 8pm EST
Available until Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 11:59pm EST

Monteverdi’s Orfeo
Premieres Sunday, November 29, 2020 at 3pm EST
Available until Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 11:59pm EST

The Tallis Scholars
Peter Phillips, director

Ave virgo sanctissima: Music for the Virgin Mary
Premieres Friday, December 11, 2020 at 8pm
Available until Friday, December 25, 2020 at 11:59pm EST

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