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Boston Early Music Festival announces the centerpiece of the June 2021 Festival—a double bill of comic operas by Georg Philipp Telemann and Johann Adolph Hasse

Cambridge, MA—The Boston Early Music Festival will present a double bill of German comic opera—featuring Telemann’s *Pimpinone* and Hasse’s *La Finta Tedesca*—as the centerpiece of the 2021 Boston Early Music Festival, June 9–13, 2021 in Boston, MA. This new production of BEMF’s GRAMMY Award-winning Chamber Opera Series replaces the previously announced opera, *Circé* by Henry Desmarest, which has been rescheduled for the 2023 Festival.

The theme of the 2021 Festival is “Music of Solace and Joy” and will feature five days of unique programs highlighting the world-class artists of the BEMF Vocal & Chamber Ensembles and the BEMF Dance Company. As planning continues, BEMF is committed to doing everything possible to maintain a safe environment for our audience, artists, and staff and will follow all recommendations from leading experts and conform to the applicable government regulations.

“We had originally planned a very different Festival for June of 2021: 'A Celebration of Women,' with a fully staged production of Desmarest's *Circé*—the first opera with a female librettist, Louise-Geneviève Gillot de Saintonge—alongside a chamber opera production of Francesca Caccini's *Alcina*—the first opera by a female composer,” explains BEMF Executive Director Kathleen Fay. “We are unwilling to compromise on the weeklong showcase of women in the arts we had planned, and as current events demand we reconsider the scale of our 2021 Festival, we are moving that event to 2023. The June 2021 Festival will now showcase 'Music of Solace and Joy,' with programs designed by our esteemed Artistic Leadership team, in as full and joyful a schedule as health and safety allow."

CENTERPIECE OPERA: *PIMPINONE AND LA FINTA TESDECA*

The stylish slapstick of these witty operas approaches seduction and social class with evocative humanity. Traditionally associated with Italy, the presentation of comic intermezzi between acts of a more serious work quickly found international success across Europe. In German master Telemann’s brilliant 1725 comic opera *Pimpinone*, the narcissistic title character is stung by the beauty and barbs of his charming chambermaid, Vespetta. Meanwhile, Telemann’s countryman Hasse was finding success in Naples with his intermezzi and serenatas. His 1728 masterpiece *La Finta Tedesca (The Fake German)* sees Sciarlotta don a series of outlandish disguises to prod her master, Pantaleone, into confessing his love for her.
GRAMMY-Winning Musical Directors Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs and Stage Directors Gilbert Blin and Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière will lead this new production in four performances, June 9–13, 2021 at the Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre (219 Tremont Street, Boston, MA, USA). Pimpinone stars celebrated soprano Amanda Forsythe as Vespetta, in her eighth consecutive June Festival appearance, alongside the thrilling baritone Douglas Williams in the title role. The cast of La Finta Tedesca will feature two GRAMMY-nominated singers, with soprano Teresa Wakim as Sciarlotta and baritone Jesse Blumberg as Pantaleone. Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière will also appear as a commedia dell’arte dancer in the production. Rounding out the directorial team will be Concertmaster Robert Mealy leading the 16-member Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Ensemble, Dance Director Melinda Sullivan, Costume Designers Gilbert Blin & Meriem Bahri, Lighting Director Kelly Martin, and Executive Producer Kathleen Fay.

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 9–13, 2021, and will feature a double-bill of comic opera by Telemann and Hasse. 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 WGBH Radio Boston, as well as a number of generous foundations and individuals from around the world.

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