

Early Music Hawaii
presents

The Rise of Italian Opera & Oratorio

The Early Music Hawaii Singers and Players
Scott Fikse, director

The Singers

Taylor Ishida, Andrea Maciel, Georgine Stark *soprano*
Naomi Castro, Sarah Lambert Connelly *alto*
Kawaiola Murray, Karol Nowicki, Benjamin Leonid *tenor*
Dylan Buntin, Scott Fikse, Keane Ishii *bass*

The Players

Darel Stark, Maile Reeves *violin*
Nancy Welliver recorder James Gochenouer *cello*
Megan Bledsoe Ward *harp*
Katherine Crosier *harpsichord, organ*



Saturday, September 14, 2019 † 7:30 pm
Lutheran Church of Honolulu
1730 Punahou Street

Program

Lamento d'Arianna (1619) Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)
Sonata per due Violini Biagio Marini (c.1587-1663)
L'Incoronazione di Poppea: Claudio Monteverdi
Come dolci, Signor, come soavi
Naomi Castro, *Poppea*, Sarah Connelly, *Nero*
Amici, e giunta l'ora
Keane Ishii, *Seneca*
Pur ti miro – Poppea & Nero

Intermission

Dialogo di Lazaro Domenico Mazzocchi (1592-1665)
Sinfonia a Tre Alessandro Stradella (1639-1682)
Recit & Aria: *Nel agone – Su la tela* Alessandro Stradella
Georgine Stark
Christmas Theater: *La Caccia del Toro* Cristofaro Caresana (c.1640-1709)
Dylan Bunten, *Toro*, Georgine Stark, *Humiltà*

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Program Notes

The early 17th century marks a dramatic turning point in the transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque. Elegant polyphony, in which multiple lines of independent melody were interweaved in a single work, gave way to the freedom of expression offered by a ground bass, instrumental or vocal, as the controlling voice of the harmony, over which soloists could both improvise and explore the emotions. Out of this concept of “melody and bass” arose the essential components of opera, oratorio, cantata and many instrumental forms such as the sonata.

Claudio Monteverdi was often held up as the architect of this revolution, a claim he would have denied himself. In fact, first in Mantua and then toward the end of his life in Venice, he synthesized the early efforts of many colleagues and his own into a higher artistic form. This is particularly evident in the new world of *Dramma per Musica*, which has since been called Opera. His *L'Orfeo*

of 1607 is recognized as the first truly integrated such work. A year later the second, *L'Arianna*, was hailed at the time as magnificent. Regrettably, the opera has been lost, but the passionate centerpiece, Ariadne's lament at her desertion by Theseus after she delivered him from the Minotaur in Crete, was so much admired, that it was also published in aria form only. And, perhaps for the only time in his career, Monteverdi later arranged it into an agonizing, latter-day madrigal for five voices and accompaniment, introducing all the emotive power of new baroque declamation. It is this version which we hear tonight. He returned to opera composition only in his final years. And his masterpiece of 1643, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, breaks dramatically with the previous convention of dealing only with uncontroversial legends and plunges into the murderous real-life passion of the Emperor Nero for his lover Poppea, and his betrayal of his wife Octavia and mentor Seneca in the exercise of absolute power.

We have chosen three scenes which illustrate one aspect of the complex intrigues of a long and powerful opera. First, Poppea and Nero share memories of a night of love; Nero promises to make her Empress; she sets him against her nemesis, the righteous Seneca, saying he claims to be the source of Nero's power; a furious Nero orders his suicide. Next, Seneca prepares himself for suicide, rejecting the appeals of his supporters to resist. The final, tender love scene so often played today, was added to the manuscript shortly afterwards not, it appears, by Monteverdi himself; but it is a reminder of the stark contrast between love, greed and betrayal in the first known operatic treatment of a real life event.

The Oratorio absorbed all the new powers of secular expression, except the public staging, in the presentation of biblical and other sacred dramas. The leading exponents (who do not include Monteverdi) were also well-known composers of opera. One of the most successful was Domenico Mazzocchi, a younger contemporary of Monteverdi in Rome. His operas are lost but several mini-oratorios, then more often titled "dialogs," have survived. Tonight, I believe for the first time in Honolulu, his drama of the raising of Lazarus from the dead opens the second half of the program.

Our rousing finale is certainly a first for Hawaii since it is only available in manuscript, which has been transcribed as a working score for us by a team of our director's contacts. Cristofaro Caresana's late 17th century dramas, described by the composer as "Christmas Theater", include a favorite theme for the season by Spanish composers, in which a raging bull is finally persuaded by the character Humility to yield to the "Word" and kneel in the presence of the newborn Christ child. Caresana was from Naples, long a Vice-Royalty of Spain.

In between, we have included a splendid recitative and aria by Alessandro Stradella, a prolific composer of full-scale oratorios and cantatas and unsung innovator in instrumental sonatas before the more famous Arcangelo Corelli. A serial “bad boy” and seducer who rose to musical fame in Rome, he fled the eternal city, to Venice, Milan and Genoa where his pursuers and a dagger finally caught up with him at the age of forty-three.

Ian Capps, *The Early Muse*, Hawaii Public Radio

Texts in English

Ariadne’s Lament

Let me die, let me die, let me die! How should I find comfort when my fate is so hard, my grief unbearable? Let me die!

O Theseus, my Theseus, yes, I still call you mine, for mine you are, even though, cruel man, you flee from me. Turn back, my Theseus, O God! Turn back and look upon the woman who left her country and kingdom for your sake, and who upon this shore will leave her bones, picked clean by pitiless wild beasts. O Theseus, my Theseus, if you only knew, O God, if you only knew, alas, how poor Ariadne suffers, perhaps you would repent and turn to shore again. But, wafted by fair winds, you sail away serenely while I weep here. Athens prepares a sumptuous welcome for you, and I remain food for wild beasts on a deserted shore. One by one you will happily embrace your aged relatives, while I shall never see my mother or father again.

What has become of all your vows to be true to me? Is this the ancestral home you promised me? Are these the diadems you place upon my brow? Are these the scepters, the jewels and golden ornaments you leave, abandoning me to beasts who devour me?

Ah Theseus, my Theseus, would you leave me to die, weeping in vain, in vain calling for aid – your wretched Ariadne who trusted you and gave you fame and life?

Alas, he does not even reply. Alas, deafer than the alder is he to my laments. O thunderclouds, whirlwinds and gales, thrust him beneath those waves! Rush here, ogres and whales, and with his corrupt limbs

fill the chasms of the deep! What am I saying? Ah! Am I mad? O wretched woman, alas, what do I ask? O Theseus, my Theseus, it was not I who spoke, it was not I who uttered those wild words. My grief spoke, my pain, my tongue, yes, but not my heart.

The Coronation of Poppea – Claudio Monteverdi

Act 1, Scene 10 – In Nero's Chamber

(Poppea and Nero proclaim their love; he promises to make her Empress; Poppea accuses Seneca of claiming to be the power behind Nero; Nero orders his suicide)

Poppea: How sweet, my lord, how delicious did you find the kisses from these lips last night? And the... apples of my breasts?

Nero: My idol, were you still in my arms, Poppea! I can scarcely breathe. I look upon your lips, and as I gaze, remember the fiery passion that my kisses aroused in you, my darling. My fate no longer hangs on heaven, but in the lovely ruby of your lips.

Poppea: My Lord, your words are so sweet that I repeat them to myself over and over, and the silent repetition melts my loving heart. As words, I hear them, as kisses I savor them; your loving words thrill my senses so deliciously that, not content with caressing my ears, they penetrate my breast and kiss my heart.

Nero: The imperial crown, fount of my power over the destinies of men and realms, I intend to share with you, and I shall only be content when you are called Empress.

Poppea: My heart beats high with hope sublime because you so command, and my reputation breathes again; but there are too many obstacles that impede your royal promises. Seneca, your teacher, that wise Stoic, astute philosopher, who always tries to convince people that he is the real power behind your throne...

Nero: What was that?

Poppea: That he is the real power behind your throne.

Nero: That decrepit madman has the gall! *(to a group of officers)* Hey! One of you make haste to Seneca, and tell him he must die this very

evening! My power must devolve from me alone, not from other men's conceits and sophisms! I would be tempted to deny the powers of my own soul if I believed they were base enough to be subject to others. Poppea, be of good heart; today you will have proof of the power of love!

Act 2, scene 3 – Seneca's House

(Seneca prepares to commit suicide, rejecting the anguished denials of his supporters)

Seneca: Friends, the hour has come to practice the virtue that I have praised so much. Death is a momentary anguish: a wandering sigh leaves the breast where for many years it has stayed like a visitor in a wayside hostel and wings its way to Olympus, the true abode of joy.

Seneca's friends: Do not die, Seneca, no! I would not wish to die, no, no! Life is too sweet, the sky too bright; all that embitters or poisons us is but a temporary setback. I would not wish to die...Do not die, Seneca, no!

Seneca: Go, all of you, to prepare my bath, for since life flows like a river, the warm current of my guiltless blood shall carpet with royal purple my road to death.

Finale – Duet Nero and Poppea

I gaze at you, delight in you, embrace you, wind you in my arms. I strive no more, think no more of death, oh my life, my treasure. I am yours, yours am I, my dearest, say it, say you are the idol of my heart, oh yes, my love, my heart, my life, oh yes!

The Dialog of Lazarus – Domenico Mazzocchi

Lazarus of Bethany lay sick; therefore Martha and Mary, his sisters, came to Jesus, saying: Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.

Jesus: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the son of God might be glorified thereby. Lazarus, our friend, sleeps. But I go, that I may awaken him out of his sleep. If he sleeps, he shall be cured.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, met him,

saying: Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

Jesus: Thy brother shall rise again. I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection of the last day. I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever believeth in me shall never die.

As soon as Mary heard and saw that Jesus was come, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him:

Mary: Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

Jesus: Where have you laid him? *Mary:* Lord, come and see.

And Jesus wept and said:

Jesus: Take ye away the stone. Lazarus, Lazarus, come forth!

Chorus: Who is God but Thou, O Lord, who alone hast wrought such great wonders? Glory to thee, thanks to thee for ever.

Recit & Aria: Alessandro Stradella

Recit: On the battlefield of the senses, greedy passion moves the ranks, shatters the integrity of great barriers. With intense fury, victorious Vice exults and oppressed Virtue weeps and is engulfed.

Aria: On the canvas of a victim, raw Love paints the mind and colors the shape of joy in black and white. Cunning Cupid's fire urges in the mind the flames to rise, the feathers to stand in vain. The passion of the God of Cnidus (ed: ancient city devoted to Venus) brooks no mercy.

Christmas Theater, La Caccia del Toro – Cristofaro Caresana

(A raging bull and Humility joust over whose power is greater – the fire-breathing horned beast or the gentle new-born babe. Humility finally drives the bull to kneel before the feet of her "Sun")

Chorus: To the hunt, hunt the bull! Sound the trumpets, beat the drums. Throughout the azure vaults let there ring out this cry - hunt the bull!

Bull (recit): From the herd in the abyss, in the realm of the storm, here I am the indomitable bull, yet the stars tremble not! And the heavens do

not darken on hearing the terrible, discordant sound of my resounding roar! A swathe of bristling hair frames my ferocious glare, and the twin scythes of my horns bedeck my black brow. Jets of fire burst from my smoking nostrils, I breathe out the fumes of death. The very image of dreadfulness, I go my way with heavy and frightening tread. No being, however charming, can cause me to turn.

(aria) What strength, I ask to see it, can stand up to mine? He that dares to joust with me will lose and fall at my feet!

Chorus: Make way for Humility, who comes with naked feet. She tamed the abyss and will conquer more than one bull.

Humility: Let him launch his blows. The bull is a coward. I fear him not!

Bull: In vain you take the name of Humility, presumptuous maiden!

Humility: The fair name of a servant has been my pride. It is a great virtue that the Lord Jesus was the son of a servant. I have come to vanquish you.

Bull: You think you can feed your lambs here? Do you dance with the birds?

Humility: I believe I am slaying dragons!

Both: Into the arena. Take up arms, let's fight!

Bull: If our Amazon is new to battle, you powerless stars are mad!

Humility: You are blind if you see not that a new Sun is born!

Bull: Like an eagle I plunge...

Humility: You are not borne by the breeze. He who flies without wings will fall into the abyss. If a Word conquers you, who will fear you again?

Bull: What's this "Word"? I know your tricks, but that it can be united in man I cannot believe.

Humility: Pride cannot understand the words of the humble. God, in order to act as God, turned into a man of flesh.

Chorus: A mortal blow—the bull trembles and falters. Humility

triumphs. The veil is made of humanity, waving the name of the Child before the beast. The tender lamb jumps on the bull's neck and seizes the horns. Let heaven and world rejoice. The deep abyss complains and groans!

Bull: What have I done to you, stars and cruel heavens, that you should hound me so? Cease your constraints on me!

Chorus: In honor of the mighty King just born, all nature smiles and the world rejoices. There is no desolate wind nor doleful echo; you alone are consumed in torment.

Humility: In order to know joy, agree to worship him.

Bull: No child can appease me.

Humility: The strength of humility will make your proud brow bow down.

Bull: I will be the prey of shrieking Cerberus' dreadful claws before I yield to your snares.

Humility: To the feet of my Sun, let us go! Kneel!

Bull: Was he born for peace or to wage war?

Humility: For your misfortune the Star has become a Lion.

Bull: Can he be a Lion, the gentle Lamb whose lips are moist with milk, and who speaks of peace to all the human race?

Humility: Yes, for he is joined to the sign of the Virgin.

Bull: Is Jupiter, so fond of the mystic shepherds, now against me?

Humility: When it comes to the haughty, he is Sagittarius.

Bull: His darts have struck me from the sky. What does he want with me on earth?

Humility: The Sun has entered Capricorn today to smash your horns!

Chorus: Long live Humility. She has opened the gates of heaven and triumphed over hell. A blessed and happy light has torn darkness asunder and conquered the bull of the infernal pits. Should anyone try to put it out, it will light again. Long live Humility!

The Artists

Scott Fikse, director

Scott Fikse is a sought-after performer, composer and director with expertise in multiple genres. Following studies in musical arts at Pacific Lutheran University, Scott served as music director for a variety of theater companies, including the University of Puget Sound's theater department, Broadway Bound Children's Theater, Celebrity Cruises mainstage, as well as the choral ensembles Vivat Musica of Seattle, Welcome Table Christian Church, and the Snohomish Men's Chorus. Scott directs the music program at the Lutheran Church of Honolulu. He has directed the locally produced concerts of Early Music Hawaii since September 2017, including our signature concerts of major works by Henry Purcell in 2017 and Treasures of the French Baroque in 2018. Scott joined the EMH Board of Directors in 2018. He also serves as music director for the Honolulu Chorale.

The EMH Singers

The Early Music Hawaii Choir was formed in 2013 under the artistic direction of the late Carl Crosier. The core group has since appeared in several guises as a chamber ensemble and in their form today as multiple soloists and choral singers. They are made up of Honolulu's finest early music performers, most of them recognized as veterans in the performance of this and other major repertoires of the professional music world in Hawaii.

The singers first performed under the EMH name in *Oratorio*, featuring the music of 17th century Roman prayer houses known as Oratories. They return to different works of this beautiful repertory this evening. They followed with music of women composers from medieval times to the Baroque, 17th century Lutheran composers, music of Spain and the New World, of Henry Purcell and of the French Baroque. Chamber concerts compared renaissance motets with contemporary versions of the same texts, and honored Shakespeare in songs from his plays on the 4th centenary of his death in 1616.

The EMH Players

The orchestra draws on leading early music specialists, who also perform with major local institutions, including the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra and the Hawaii Opera Theater. They perform tonight under the leadership of Darel Stark, who worked for many years as an expert in baroque performance style with Carl Crosier in the Bach Chamber Orchestra and at the Lutheran Church of Honolulu. Katherine Crosier has been a leading organist and teacher in Hawai'i for many years. She serves as Artistic Director on the EMH Board.

Sponsors and Contributors

We are most grateful to early contributors to the season, without whose support these concerts would not be possible: Anonymous (2), Marilyn and Carl Bernhardt, Jeannette and Ian Capps, Katherine Crosier, The Department of Arts and Humanities at Hawaii Pacific University, Yvonne Hsieh, Bernice and Robert Littman, the Pikake Foundation, Herbert Sato, Alan Teraoka, Julie and Garrett Webb.

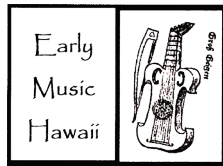
Acknowledgments

Many thanks to our loyal team of volunteers who consistently give their time and efforts to make these concerts run smoothly.

Special thanks to Katherine Crosier for artistic direction and the design of promotional materials and concert programs; and to Jeannette Johnson-Capps for managing the complex logistics of concerts on Oahu.

Lutheran Church of Honolulu

Early Music Hawaii thanks the Lutheran Church of Honolulu for continuing to host our concerts for more than a decade. The Church resonates with the exceptional acoustics, intimate ambience and warm aloha which suit the early music repertory so well.



www.earlymusichawaii.org

Early Music Hawaii is a nonprofit organization established in 2004 to promote the performance and enjoyment of medieval, renaissance and baroque music in our islands and to encourage historical performance practices. Each concert year, we present one major choral/orchestral concert in Honolulu and one chamber concert on Oahu and Hawaii Island, all with local performers. We also present two leading professional early music ensembles from the mainland who perform in Honolulu and Kailua-Kona, as well as teach at workshops in Kona when appropriate.

Modest membership dues, concert proceeds and freewill donations sustain these efforts. Ticket sales alone cannot cover the cost of concert presentations, here or elsewhere in the US or abroad. We are most grateful to a select number of generous sponsors and hope you will consider making a donation at the desk tonight or online at www.earlymusichawaii.org.

2019-2020 Season

Be sure to mark your calendars for the rest of the season!

The Baltimore Consort

Honolulu, November 2, 2019

Kailua-Kona, Sunday, November 3, 2019

Adeu Dundee

Early and traditional music of Scotland

Celebrate the storied Baltimore Consort as they visit Hawaii during their 40th Anniversary tour of the U.S. They bring one of their most popular programs of sprightly dances and gentle or saucy songs from Scotland. “Few early music performers have more fun” – The New Yorker



The EMH Chamber Singers & Players

Honolulu, January 25, 2020

Kailua-Kona, January 26, 2020

Motets & Songs of the Renaissance

The French word “motet” applied equally to sacred and secular song. By the 16th century, it applied only to sacred polyphony and the chanson took over the secular song. The EMH Chamber Singers & Players sample developments in the two genres from 15th and 16th century renaissance Europe.



Ensemble Calextone

Honolulu, April 18, 2020

Kailua-Kona, April 19, 2020

Boccaccio’s Decameron

A Multimedia Presentation of the Age

Renowned for multimedia programs of medieval music, Shira Kammen’s quartet brings to life the music, readings and illustrations from Boccaccio’s famous work with Florentine songs and dances – stories of hunting, games, love, ribaldry and longing.