

Music from the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

March 25, 2006 at 1:30 PM
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
College Station, TX

Featuring

Melissa Givens, Soprano
Alan Austin and Boel Gidholm, Violins
Christopher Haritatos, Cello
Vivian Montgomery, Harpsichord
Leon W. Couch III, Organ

Wir beten zu dem Tempel an... Höchster, mache deine Gute J. S. Bach
from *Jauchzett Gott in Allen Landen*, BWV 51 (voice, 2 violins, continuo) (1685 – 1750)

Endless pleasure, endless love (voice, continuo) G. F. Handel
Myself I shall adore, from *Semele* (1685-1759)

Variations on *Unter der Linden grüne* (harpsichord solo) Jan Pieterszoon Sweeklinck
(1562-1621)

Euridice dall'Inferno (voice, continuo) Alessandro Scarlatti
Recitative: *Del lagrimoso lido* (1660-1725)
Aria: *Se d'Averno la fiamma m'accende*
Recitative: *Se le mago tuo lira*
Aria: *Non mi tormentar più*

Passacaglia in d, BuxWV 161 (organ solo) Dietrich Buxtehude
(1637-1707)

Singet dem Herren (violin, continuo) Buxtehude

Quando Amor vuol ferirmi (voice, continuo) A. Scarlatti
Recitative: *Quando Amor vuol ferirmi*
Aria: *Voi mi date la vita*
Recitative: *Allor che non vi vedo*
Aria: *Sol di mirarvi*

Toccata in F, BWV 540/1 (organ solo) Bach

Scritte con falso inganno (voice, 2 violins, continuo) Domenico Scarlatti
Recitative: *Scritte con falso inganno* (1685-1757)

Aria: Che vuol dir quel tuo non sono
Dimmi lingua bugiarda
Aria: Vorresti, si vorresti

This program is co-sponsored by the Melbern G. Glasscock Center for Humanities Research, the Academy for Visual & Performing Arts, and the Department of Performance Studies at Texas A&M University. For more details on other events of the American Musicological Society, SW Chapter Meeting, at Texas A&M today, see <http://orpheus.tamu.edu/couch> . Many thanks to Bonnie Harris-Reynolds at St. Thomas Episcopal Church.

BIOGRAPHIES

American soprano **Melissa Givens** has been resoundingly praised by audiences and critics alike for her rich, liquid tone and intelligent, musical interpretations. The Houston Chronicle's Charles Ward called her a singer whose music making is "consistently rewarding" and "a pleasure to hear." Of her most recent performances, he simply stated, "Soprano Melissa Givens was the best, singing with effortless tone and gracious musicality." The Austin American-Statesman, commenting on her performance of the Brahms A German Requiem at the Victoria Bach Festival, marveled that she "sounded like the angelic voice that Brahms probably imagined as he composed it." Further critical praise has come from Mary Kunz of The Buffalo News, noting Givens "sings with a joyful authority."

Recent appearances include Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* in a return engagement with the Texas Ballet Theater and the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, prompting the Dallas Morning News' Dana Gavin Frank to say that "[the dancer's] seraphic acrobatics were a physical realization of soprano Melissa Givens' heavenly voice." The same program with the Houston Ballet at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre elicited the exclamation of "superbly sung" from The Moscow Times.

Other recent appearances include an enthusiastically received turn as soprano soloist in Bach's *St. John Passion* for the Bach Society of Houston and *Donna Anna* in the Houston Ebony Opera Guild's 2004 production of *Don Giovanni*. That year she also essayed the title role in the staged *Ars Lyrica* Houston production of Alessandro Scarlatti's oratorio *La Giuditta* under the direction of renowned American harpsichordist and musicologist Matthew Dirst who praised her as having "the perfect baroque voice." In June of 2004, she gave the Texas premiere of *Baruch* by San Francisco based composer Daniel David FeinSmith with *barmusic*, a Houston area chamber music group devoted to music of the last fifty years.

Ms. Givens remains in demand on concert series throughout the United States, having most recently given recitals in Buffalo, Houston and the Charlotte area. She is a champion of collaborative musical endeavors, performing with various chamber music groups, as well as the internationally acclaimed Houston Grand Opera Chorus, and Austin based *Conspirare*. Her solo appearance on their recent Clarion Records release, *through the green fuse*, was favorably noted in the Austin Chronicle. She can also be heard on her solo compact disc, *let the rain kiss you*, available at www.melissagivens.com.

Vivian Montgomery, harpsichordist, holds prizes from the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition and other international competitions. A recipient of a 1995 Solo Recitalist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, Vivian earned her Bachelor and Masters degrees in Early Keyboard Performance from the University of Michigan and is nearing completion of her DMA in Early Music from Case Western Reserve University. Vivian is nationally recognized as a soloist, and chamber musician, having toured extensively with her ensembles *Cecilia's Circle* and *Galhano/Montgomery Duo*. As an instructor of harpsichord, she has been on the faculties of Vanderbilt University and the Macphail Center for the Arts in Minneapolis, and is now teaching early keyboards at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. As a conductor, Vivian has served as Music Director for the Minneapolis-based baroque opera company *Ex Machina*, as director of the Case Western Reserve University Baroque Orchestra, and as Director of the Dickinson College Collegium. She is a fervent advocate for innovative programming and staging of early repertoire, and has committed much of her musical life to

merging her performance interests with studies of social and political context. Vivian now resides in the Boston area, where she is active as an instructor, performer, coach, and conductor. She can be heard on recordings issued by Centaur, Innova, and the Schubert Club.

Boel Gidholm studied violin at the University of Gothenburg in her home country of Sweden, and studied baroque violin and performance practice at the Akademie für Alte Musik in Bremen, Germany. She has performed throughout Europe and the US as a baroque violinist and violist, working with early music ensembles such as Pegasus, New York Collegium, ARTEK, Concert Royal and Apollo's Fire, and has recorded with Fiori Musicali-Barockorchester Bremen, Steintor Barock (Bremen), Ensemble Aperto (Hannover-Köln), L'Arco (Hannover), Les Perruques d'Amsterdam, Apollo's Fire, New York State Baroque Orchestra and The Publick Musick. Chamber music performances have taken her to Italy, France, Latvia, the Canary Islands, Canada and Denmark.

Christopher Haritatos holds degrees from the University of Chicago (BA with honors, Phi Beta Kappa), the Cleveland Institute of Music (MM), and the Eastman School of Music (DMA), where his major teachers were Alan Harris and Steven Doane. He also studied baroque cello with Jaap ter Linden as a Fulbright Scholar at the Akademie für Alte Musik Bremen. In Europe he performed with groups such as Fiori Musicali-Barockorchester Bremen, for whom he was continuo cellist and made numerous recordings and tours, and Andrew Lawrence-King's "The Harp Consort," with whom he also recorded and toured. Since returning to the US he has enjoyed a busy career as a freelance cellist with ensembles such as the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (with whom he was a regular substitute cellist), Tafelmusik (Toronto, Canada), the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, the New York Collegium, the Austin Lyric Opera Orchestra (with whom he was Interim Principal and Acting Principal cellist), Pegasus, ARTEK, Brandywine Baroque (Wilmington, DE), Concert Royal, the Dallas Bach Society, Pittsburgh Collegium Musicum, and Handel & Haydn Society (Boston). He has given master classes and clinics at Luther College, the University of North Texas and Baylor University. Currently he is a member of the Austin Symphony Orchestra and the Texas State University Faculty String Quartet, and also plays regularly with The Publick Musick (Rochester, NY), Apollo's Fire (Cleveland), Ars Lyrica (Houston), and Context (Houston). He has taught at Texas State University-San Marcos since 2003.

Alan Austin Active career as chamber musician, soloist, and orchestral player; member, period instrument groups Ars Lyrica Houston and Aquinas, the resident ensemble at the University of St. Thomas; principal player and concertmaster, Texas Bach Collegium (San Antonio), J.S. Bach Society Orchestra (Houston); regular performances, Texas Baroque Ensemble, Dallas Bach Society; featured guest performer, Early Music Weekend at Roundtop, Amherst Early Music Festival; studies with Baroque violinists Simon Standage, Elizabeth Blumenstock, Manfredo Kraemer, and Andrew Manze; faculty, University of St. Thomas, UH Moores School of Music; recordings on Dorian and Zephyr labels.

Leon Couch teaches organ and coordinates the music-theory curriculum at Texas A&M University. In Fall 2005, he was named the 2005–2006 Montague Teaching Excellence Scholar for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Dr. Couch is a featured artist of The Academy for the Visual and Performing Arts at Texas A&M. He has also taught organ studio, music theory,

and undergraduate mathematics at the University of Cincinnati. He earned a D.M.A. in Organ, Ph.D. in Music Theory, and M.M. in Organ from the College-Conservatory of Music at The University of Cincinnati, under Roberta Gary and others. His B.M. in Organ, B.A. in Math, B.S. in Physics, Performer's Certificate, and A.A. are from The University of Florida, where he studied organ with Willis Bodine. As a scholar, Dr. Couch concentrates on pragmatic applications of contemporary and historical music theory to keyboard performance. As a performer, he presents organ recitals, masterclasses, and lecture-recitals throughout the United States.