



Sweet Philomela

ARS
LYRICA
HOUSTON 

Friday, September 22 at 7:30pm

Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

MATTHEW DIRST | *Artistic Director*

Good evening and welcome to *Sweet Philomela*, the first program of a season devoted to *Artful Women* and their various interactions with the musical world of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We're delighted to welcome back soprano Sherezade Panthaki and to introduce glass harmonica virtuoso Dennis James to our home audience. Dennis gave a memorable performance of Hasse's *L'Armonica* with Ars Lyrica at Cornell University in November 2014, and we're very pleased to be able to reprise this extraordinary cantata with him in Houston.

Sweet Philomela serves up both myth and reality, from a beloved literary character to a pair of talented sisters who set the European musical world on its ear during the 1760s and 70s. Who was Philomela? The Roman poet Ovid relates, in Book VI of the *Metamorphoses*, the tale of an Athenian princess violated by her brother-in-law Tereus, who cut out her tongue and abandoned her. The gods later transformed Philomela into a nightingale to escape his further revenge. That bird's sorrowful but beautiful song, which runs like a thread through tonight's program, is a useful reminder of the transporting nature of art itself. For those still suffering the effects of Houston's recent catastrophic flooding, we hope this music will be a balm for both the ear and the soul.

Our 2017/18 season of *Artful Women* continues November 12 with *Italian Sirens*, a program featuring music by three remarkable female musician-composers of the early seventeenth century. Subscriptions are still available and can be purchased either at intermission or through the Hobby Center box office. Check the Ars Lyrica website for the most recent information: www.arslyricahouston.org.

Thanks for joining us and enjoy the program!



MATTHEW DIRST
Artistic Director

PROGRAM

Excerpts from *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, George Frideric Handel
HWV 55 and the Twelve Concerti Grossi, Op. 6 (1685–1759)

Largo (Op. 6/7/i)
Air: "Come, thou Goddess, Fair and Free"
Larghetto andante (Op. 6/2/iii)
Accompagnato: "Come, Pensive Nun"
Arioso: "Come but Keep thy Wonted State"
Allegro (Op. 6/7/ii)
Accompagnato: "First, and Chief, on Golden Wing"
Air: "Sweet Bird"

Adagio for Glass Harmonica, K. 356 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

Quartet in G Major from *Tafelmusik*, TWV 43:G2 Georg Philipp Telemann
(1681–1767)
Largo–Allegro–Largo
Vivace–Moderato–Vivace
Grave–Vivace

INTERMISSION

Symphony in F Major, Wq. 183/3 Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
(1714–1788)
Allegro di molto
Larghetto
Presto

L'Armonica Johann Adolph Hasse
(1699–1783)
Introduction: Un poco Lento–Allegro di molto–Lento
Aria: "Ah perché col canto mio"
Recitative: "Ardir Germana"
Aria: "Alla stagion di fiori"

PROGRAM NOTES

Handel composed his ode *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* in 1740, as English-language works finally replaced Italian operas once and for all in English theaters (though a preference for Italian titles lingered). Not properly speaking an oratorio, this grandiose ode—more a poetic than musical category—is a dialogue between the extrovert and introvert in all of us. Its inspired libretto incorporates two John Milton poems, *L'Allegro* (Mirth) and *Il Penseroso* (Melancholy), plus Charles Jennen's *Il Moderato* (Moderation), itself an homage to Milton. Though Milton's poetry was then over 100 years old, its wide range of quintessential English imagery—from lovely pastoral scenes to stirring cathedral music—still held great sway over Handel's audiences. Among this ode's most fetching movements are several that evoke sounds from nature: the warbling of the nightingale, for example, features prominently in "Sweet Bird." Our opening set, which mixes various solos from this work with Handel concerto movements, is a kind of miniaturization of the composer's own practice: the first performance of *L'Allegro* in February 1740 included two of his Op. 6 concerti as intermission features.

Just two decades later, Benjamin Franklin enchanted London audiences with his latest invention: the glass harmonica. This instrument mechanized the familiar practice of rubbing rims of glasses filled with varying amounts of water, thereby producing a strange, unearthly resonance. Franklin's wondrous machine operates by means of glass bowls of varying sizes nested horizontally on a spindle, rotated steadily by a foot treadle (like a spinning wheel), and played by applying wet fingers to their rims. When new, the instrument was celebrated for its ability "to accompany the voice...and never [be] out of tune," and it continued to captivate audiences well into the nineteenth century, by which time it was often associated with occult practices, mesmerism, and madness. Mozart's famous C-major Adagio, the best-known solo work for

glass harmonica, highlights its distinctively veiled yet transparent timbre, which has often been compared to the voices of angels.

Georg Philipp Telemann, arguably the most wide-ranging composer of the late Baroque, also knew how to create music that people craved. His *Tafelmusik* or *Musique de Table*, part of a long tradition of diverse chamber collections "for the table," was one of the most successful publications of its day. Its initial announcement in 1732 garnered some 250 subscriptions from all over Europe, a truly astonishing number (Bach's *Art of Fugue*, by contrast, had barely 30 subscribers). Telemann packed its three volumes with all manner of pieces in his signature "mixed" style: effectively a combination of Italian virtuosity, German learnedness, and French *savoir-faire*. Each "Production," as he called them, includes an *ouverture* with dances, a quartet, a concerto, a trio, and either a sonata or some other kind of solo work. This evening's G-major Quartet, from Production 1, is scored for flute, oboe, violin, and basso continuo.

As Telemann's successor in Hamburg (as Director of Music at that city's five principal churches), C. P. E. Bach used his fame and prominence to cultivate an increasingly international music-buying public. His four "Symphonies for Twelve Obligato Instruments," Wq. 183, came about thanks to a 1775 commission from a Hamburg patron whose name, alas, is lost to history. The title of these works reflects a new trend in writing symphonic music in the 1770s: unlike Emanuel Bach's previous two sets of string symphonies, these new works are scored for two horns, two flutes, two oboes, bassoon, two violins, viola, cello, violone, and harpsichord continuo (for a total of thirteen instruments: Emanuel neglected to count himself at the keyboard). Each comprises three movements: an imposing *Allegro*, a tender and introspective slow movement, and a light-hearted finale. In addition to his signature melodic swoops, harmonic deflections, and sudden stops, C. P. E. Bach provides transitions in these symphonies from one movement to another, turning each into a self-contained dramatic *scena*.

The glass harmonica (or "Armonica," as its inventor called it) enjoyed its greatest heyday during the 1760s-80s, especially under the hands of the first English virtuosa Marianne Davies, who had been taught by Franklin himself. In 1768 Davies and her sister, the singer Cecilia, left for an extended concert tour of Europe armed with letters of introduction from Johann Christian (the "London") Bach to his

brothers Carl Philipp Emanuel and Wilhelm Friedmann. In Vienna they lodged in the house of the legendary court composer Johann Adolph Hasse and became favorites of Empress Maria Theresia. No surprise, then, that their magical music-making inspired a cantata by Hasse for the 1769 wedding celebrations of Duchess Maria Amalia to the Spanish prince Ferdinand of Bourbon, Duke of Parma.

L'Armonica, set to a libretto by the esteemed poet Pietro Metastasio, celebrates the power of music to bless the royal nuptials while drawing attention, in a curiously self-referential way, to the union of voice and glass harmonica in the Davies sisters' performances. Ben Franklin owned a copy of the libretto, and must surely have been gratified that his invention had found such favor at the Hapsburg court. Metastasio's enchanting text invokes in its first lines Philomela, whose "sweet chain for souls" inspires both the vocal line and its magical accompaniment, made by "skilled hands [on] resonant, ever-changing crystals." What a rapturous wedding this must have been, with Cecilia matching perfectly her voice to the uncanny sonorities of her sister Marianne's glass music.

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ARTISTIC PERSONNEL

ARS LYRICA HOUSTON

Matthew Dirst, *Artistic Director*

SWEET PHILOMELA ARTISTS

Sherezade Panthaki	<i>soprano</i>	Deborah Dunham	<i>violone</i>
Dennis James	<i>glass harmonica</i>	Colin St-Martin	<i>traverso</i>
Elizabeth Blumenstock	<i>violin 1</i>	Alaina Diehl	
Maria Lin		Meg Owens	<i>Baroque oboe</i>
Oleg Sulyga		Pablo Moreno	
Hae-a Lee		Paul Avril	<i>natural horn</i>
Alan Austin	<i>violin 2</i>	James Wilson	
Noel Martin		Benjamin Kamins	<i>bassoon</i>
Nadia Lesinska		Matthew Dirst	<i>harpsichord & conductor</i>
Matthew Detrick			
Erika Lawson	<i>viola</i>		
Yvonne Smith			
Barrett Sills	<i>cello</i>		
Eric Smith			

Special thanks to Elizabeth Duerr, Deborah Dunham, Janet and Ed Hess, and Douglas D. Koch, MD for providing accommodations for Ars Lyrica Houston artists.

Acknowledgement of gratitude to artists Steve Estes, Melissa Williams, Hae-a Lee, Lizzy Golofeev, Ally Smither, and Joseph Gaines for their contributions toward the hurricane Harvey relief and recovery effort.



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ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Soprano **Sherezade Panthaki**'s international success has been fueled by superbly honed musicianship; "shimmering sensitivity" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*); "radiant" voice (*The Washington Post*); and vividly passionate interpretations, "mining deep emotion from the subtle shaping of the lines" (*The New York Times*). An acknowledged star in the early-music field, Ms. Panthaki has ongoing collaborations with leading early music interpreters including Nicholas McGegan, Simon Carrington, Matthew Halls, and Masaaki Suzuki, with whom she made her New York Philharmonic debut. Panthaki's recent performance with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and conductor Nicholas McGegan was named one of the "Top 10 Classical Music Events of 2015."

Ms. Panthaki's 2017/18 season features performances of Vivaldi's *Gloria* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl and the St. Louis Symphony (Nicholas McGegan conducting), the Milwaukee Symphony, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Music of the Baroque, her return to Ars Lyrica, Pasadena Symphony Orchestra, Orlando Philharmonic, and a United States *Christmas Oratorio* tour with Bach Collegium Japan.



From 1964, when his first performance was broadcast by Philadelphia television at his age of fourteen, until his retirement from university teaching in 2015, **Dennis James** has maintained an internationally renowned professional career in music performance, recording, instrument preservation, educational activities and specialized research. A dedicated and imaginative devotee of music history and authentic performance practices, he composes, arranges and transcribes music, embracing stylistic changes while setting new cultural fashion trends. James' career focus now includes working with major cultural institutions worldwide to encourage specialist enthusiasts and dedicated amateurs by fostering concentrated specialist studies extending his Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of the Arts appointment that introduced formal glass music studies at the graduate level with a concentration on glass armonica performance. James studied organ and piano as a performance major at Indiana University (B. Mus. '73, M. Mus. '78) with post-graduate studies at Arizona State University and Ohio State University schools of music.



Widely admired as a Baroque violinist of expressive eloquence and technical sparkle, **Elizabeth Blumenstock** is a long-time concertmaster with the Bay Area's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and American Bach Soloists, concertmaster of the International Handel Festival Orchestra in Goettingen, Germany, and Artistic Director of the Corona del Mar Baroque Music Festival in Orange County, California. Her love of chamber music has involved her in several accomplished and interesting smaller ensembles including Galax Quartet, Live Oak Baroque, Sarasa, and Voices of Music. Ms. Blumenstock teaches regularly for the Juilliard Historical Performance program, at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the American Bach Soloists' summer Festival and Academy, the International Baroque Institute at Longy, and the Valley of the Moon Music Festival. She plays a 1660 Andrea Guarneri violin built in Cremona, Italy, on generous permanent loan to her from the Philharmonia Baroque Period Instrument Trust.



Barrett Sills is a prizewinning cellist in international competitions in Europe and South America. A native Texan, he was a scholarship student at Yale, where he was a teaching assistant to Aldo Parisot and recipient of the prestigious Maxwell Belding Internship Award. Mr. Sills has performed with orchestras in France and Germany, and as recitalist has performed in Paris, the south of France, and throughout South America as an Artistic Ambassador for the United States Information Agency. He is principal cellist with both the Houston Ballet Orchestra and the Houston Grand Opera Orchestra, and he is frequently featured soloist for the Houston Ballet. In addition to performing on the modern cello, he is a recognized artist on both the baroque cello and viola da gamba and is often heard in concert with Ars Lyrica Houston.



Colin St-Martin, who since childhood was interested in 17th and 18th century European culture, began playing the traverso at the age of 14. His studies took him to Brussels, Belgium, where he obtained a First Prize (bachelor of music) from the Royal Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of the renowned master, Bart Kuijken. He returned to the US to complete graduate work at the Early Music Institute at Indiana University. Currently, Mr St-Martin is busy as a performer and recording artist with many early music ensembles across the US in addition to being sought after as a master teacher.



In demand as a performer on historical oboes, **Meg Owens** has appeared with many of North America's baroque ensembles, including American Bach Soloists, Apollo's Fire, Folger Consort, Handel and Haydn Society, Opera Lafayette, Tafelmusik, Tempesta di Mare, and Washington Bach Consort. She is a member of the chamber music groups REBEL and Kleine Kammermusik (founding member); the latter has recently released its debut recording, *Fanfare and Filigree*, on the Acis label. Hailing from eastern North Carolina, Ms. Owens earned degrees in oboe performance at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the Manhattan School of Music, and the City University of New York. Ms. Owens is on faculty in the Historical Performance Institute at Indiana University, the Amherst Early Music workshop, and George Mason University, and directs Mason's baroque chamber orchestra. Ms. Owens's baroque oboe was made by Randall Cook (Basel, 2014), after Jonathan Bradbury (London, early 18th century).



Ars Lyrica Founder & Artistic Director **Matthew Dirst** is the first American musician to win major international prizes in both organ and harpsichord, including the American Guild of Organists National Young Artist Competition (1990) and the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition (1993). Widely admired for his stylish playing and conducting, the *Dallas Morning News* recently praised his "clear and evocative conducting" of Handel's *Alexander's Feast*, which "yielded a performance as irresistibly lively as it was stylish." Dirst's recordings with Ars Lyrica have earned a Grammy nomination and widespread critical acclaim. His degrees include a PhD in musicology from Stanford University and the *prix de virtuosité* in both organ and harpsichord from the Conservatoire National de Reuil-Malmaison, France, where he spent two years as a Fulbright scholar. Equally active as a scholar and as an organist, Dirst is Professor of Music at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, and Organist at St Philip Presbyterian Church in Houston. He is the author of *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marpurg to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and the editor of *Bach and the Organ* (University of Illinois Press, 2016).

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ABOUT ARS LYRICA

Founded in 1998 by harpsichordist and conductor Matthew Dirst, **Ars Lyrica Houston** presents a diverse array of music from the 17th and 18th centuries on period instruments. Its local subscription series, according to the Houston Chronicle, "sets the agenda" for early music in Houston and it also appears regularly at major festivals and conferences, including the 2014 Berkeley Early Music Festival & Exhibition. Ars Lyrica's distinctive programming favors Baroque dramatic and chamber works, and its pioneering efforts have won international acclaim: the ensemble's world première recording of Johann Adolf Hasse's *Marc'Antonio e Cleopatra*, hailed by Early Music America as "a thrilling performance that glows in its quieter moments and sparkles with vitality," was nominated for a Grammy Award® for Best Opera 2011.

Artful Women HONOREE

Jano Nixon Kelley

This season it seems especially appropriate that we honor some of Houston's leading female philanthropists, especially those who are longtime members of the Ars Lyrica family. Our first concert thus honors **Jano Nixon Kelley**, whose tireless advocacy and generous support of many of Houston's leading cultural organizations has been crucial to artistic growth, financial sustainability, and long-term impact in the community.



Jano Nixon Kelley is the Director of Marketing and Leasing for Cameron Management. Jano oversees leasing, corporate branding efforts, media relationships, website management, broker, investor, and tenant relations. Through her position as Director of Marketing, Jano has been able to support many philanthropic endeavors including but not limited to Houston Symphony, Central Houston, Inc. The Houston Parks Board, Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Rice Design Alliance, The Beacon, COMPASS, The Heritage Society and Preservation Houston. Prior to joining Cameron Management, Jano had a career in

corporate banking where her last position was with Toronto Dominion Bank. She coordinated cross-functional teams of marketing, legal, administrative, lenders, and credit departments. Additionally, she has been a successful art broker, culinary event planner and instructor. Jano's personal volunteer efforts include Ars Lyrica, Camp for All, St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Daughters of the Republic of Texas and Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW). She met her husband, John Kelley, through their combined volunteer efforts at Camp for All. Jano's son, Kley Nixon, resides in Brooklyn, NY. She is thrilled to be recognized by Ars Lyrica Houston!

WORDS OF CONGRATULATIONS

"Your love, service, and commitment to the arts is truly inspiring to us all! Congratulation on this special recognition."

—DESARIE & MICHAEL BATTS

"Jano Nixon Kelley is so worthy of this honor. She is a tireless advocate of the arts and a pleasure to know and work with. I am proud to call her my friend.

Congratulations!" —COOKIE SHANEYFELT

"Jano, you are the best. Enjoy your special night." —NANCY AND ROB MARTIN

"Jano has been a beacon of light since I first met her about 10 years ago. She also introduced us to Ars Lyrica. She's always cheerful and bubbly, you cannot help but smile when you see her. Jano is deserving of all of the accolades bestowed upon her and more. Her tireless work behind the scenes of everything she touches is the example we strive for. Jano, we salute you."

—DOUGLAS SELWYN

"CAMP FOR ALL is proud to join in and sing the praises of Jano. She is a key volunteer with our organization and her efforts help nearly 11,000 special needs campers each year. Brava Jano!" —CAMP FOR ALL

"Jano has always been such a friend to IA Interior Architects as we developed our business in Houston. We are deeply grateful for her wisdom and friendship."

—RUSSELL MANTHY

"I am very happy to be able to celebrate Jano Nixon Kelley as an *Artful Woman* Honoree!"

—HOWARD CORDRAY

"Congratulations Jano! You are a tireless worker for the arts. You deserve to be recognized!" —LISA ANDERSON

"Jano is a lifelong family friend and business colleague whose dedication to Ars Lyrica and the Houston arts community is steadfast and enthusiastic. Best wishes to Jano and John, and may they keep up their great work!"

—TED DOM, LYNNE WHITWORTH, HENRY DOM, ISABELLE DOM

"Jano, you are a star, always shining brightly along with your fabulous smile! Your commitment and never-ending energy to the non-profit world is one of a kind."

—PAULA CIZIK

"Thank you, Jano, for all that you do for the arts community—and with such great energy and creativity too. Bravo!"

—KELLY FOREMAN & LAURIE WILLIAMS

"Growing up in a small town, our parents taught us the importance of volunteering, and Jano has brought that to the big city with grace and beauty."

—BETSY AND MIKE CARRELL

"We are so proud of Jano, and how she gives of her time, talent and treasure."

—ALICE NIXON

"Jano, you continuously set a great example of leadership and dedication to your career, community and charities. I am honored to work alongside you daily."

—MADELINE GREGORY, *Cameron Management Marketing & Leasing Coordinator*

Special thanks to Brendan and Kathryn Godfrey for underwriting the post-concert reception.

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HOUSTON EARLY MUSIC

**Friday, Nov. 3
7:30 PM
LES DÉLICES**
Myths and Allegories
Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church

Greek mythologies inspire this program for Cleveland-based Les Délices, directed by Baroque oboist Debra Nagy, with rising star soprano Clara Rottso

**tickets:
281-846-4222 HoustonEarlyMusic.org**

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Italian Sirens

The decades around 1600 saw a remarkable flowering of female musical talent, virtuoso singers especially. *Italian Sirens* explores music for these unique voices by Isabella Leonarda, Francesca Caccini and Barbra Strozzi with some of Houston's brightest young talent.

SOLOISTS



Sydney Anderson
soprano



Alexandra Smither
soprano



Cecilia Duarte
mezzo-soprano

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 AT 6 PM

Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts