

Signature Works



Sunday, March 14 at 6 pm

Digital Program Book

ARS LYRICA HOUSTON

presents

Signature Works

Broadcast Program
Sunday, March 14, 2021
6 pm

featuring

Sherezade Panthaki	<i>soprano</i>
Jay Carter	<i>countertenor</i>
Adam LaMotte	<i>concertmaster</i>
Kurt Johnson	<i>violin</i>
Maria Lin	<i>violin</i>
Oleg Sulyga	<i>violin</i>
Alan Austin	<i>violin</i>
Hae-a Lee	<i>violin</i>
James Dunham	<i>viola</i>
Erika Lawson	<i>viola</i>
Barrett Sills	<i>cello</i>
Eric Smith	<i>cello</i>
Deborah Dunham	<i>violone</i>
Daryl Robinson	<i>organ</i>
Matthew Dirst	<i>harpsichord & artistic director</i>

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*Special thanks to St Philip Presbyterian Church
for hosting our Spring 2021 broadcast programs.*

PROGRAM

Eine kleine Nachtmusik K. 525

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

Allegro
Romanze
Menuetto – Trio
Rondo

Stabat Mater

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi
(1710–1736)

Duet: *Stabat Mater dolorosa*
Aria (soprano): *Cujus animam gementem*
Duet: *O quam tristis et afflicta*
Aria (alto): *Quae moerebat et dolebat*
Duet: *Quis est homo, qui non fleret*
Aria (soprano): *Vidit suum dulcem natum*
Aria (alto): *Eja mater fons amoris*
Duet: *Fac ut ardeat cor meum*
Duet: *Sancta Mater, istud agas*
Aria (alto): *Fac ut portem Christi mortem*
Duet: *Inflammatum et accensum*
Duet: *Quando corpus morietur – Amen*

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

*Stabat Mater dolorosa
Iuxta crucem lacrimosa
Dum pendebat Filius.*

The sorrowful Mother
stood weeping beside the cross
on which her Son was hanging.

*Cuius animam gementem
Contristatam et dolentem
Pertransivit gladius.*

Through her grieving soul,
full of compassion and sadness,
a sword passed.

*O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater unigeniti!*

O how sad and distressed
was that blessed Mother
of the only-begotten!

*Quae moerebat et dolebat,
Pia Mater, dum videbat
Nati poenas incliti.*

How she mourned and lamented
while witnessing the torment
of her beloved son.

*Quis est homo qui non fleret,
Matrem Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio?*

Who would not weep,
seeing Christ's Mother
consumed with such anguish?

*Vidit suum dulcem natum
Moriendo desolatum
Dum emisit spiritum.*

She saw her precious child
die disconsolate,
as His spirit departed.

*Eja Mater, fons amoris
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac ut tecum lugeam.*

Blessed Mother, fountain of love,
allow me to share your sorrow,
so that I may grieve, too.

*Fac ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum
Ut sibi complaceam.*

Make my heart burn
with love for Christ my God,
so that I may please Him.

*Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifixi fige plagas
cordi meo valide.*

Holy Mother, may it be so:
implant the wounds of the crucified
deep in my heart.

*Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
passionis fac consortem,
et plagas recolare.*

Make me a witness to Christ's death,
so that I may share His passion,
and commemorate His suffering.

*Inflammatu et accensus
per te, Virgo, sim defensus
in die iudicii.*

Inflame and animate me,
so that I may safeguard you, Virgin,
on the day of judgment.

*Fac me cruce custodiri
morte Christi praemuniri
confoveri gratia.*

Make me a defender of the cross,
protected by Christ's death
and comforted by His grace.

*Quando corpus morietur,
fac ut animae donetur
Paradisi gloria. Amen.*

When I die,
grant that my soul is taken up
into paradise. Amen.

PROGRAM NOTES

This program, devoted to “signature” musical works by two leading lights of the eighteenth century, begins with a ubiquitous instrumental serenade and ends with a well-known setting of a Latin hymn. Separated chronologically by some fifty years, these beloved works have long exemplified the personal style of their respective creators. Their capacity to charm, beguile, and move us—whether encountered live on the concert stage or as canned music in an elevator—suggests a level of perfection rarely achieved in art of any kind.

Perhaps the most obvious connection between Pergolesi and Mozart is their joint embrace of a musical language that, first and foremost, served opera—then the dominant form of musical entertainment—with beautiful melodies and memorable rhythmic patterns. Though trained as a violinist, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi focused his compositional energies on the two reigning operatic types of his native Naples: *opera seria* and *opera buffa*. He also created concerted sacred works in the operatic style for various patrons and organizations in his

hometown of Naples. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart likewise mastered all kinds of opera, in Italian and his native German, as well as instrumental and sacred genres. Coincidentally, both composers also left this life at a relatively young age, at the height of their respective powers.

In a 1787 letter Mozart refers to a recently completed work as “eine kleine Nachtmusik”: literally, a little night-music or *serenade*, as a genre was then known. Though listed in the Köchel catalog under the more prosaic title Serenade No. 13 in G Major, K. 525, Mozart’s description has proved a more durable moniker for a work that resembles serenades he wrote in Salzburg. Likely the result of a commission, though we’re not sure for whom, *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* may have originally comprised an additional movement beyond the traditional four ordered in the manner of a classical symphony.

Its initial Allegro begins with a vigorous triadic theme of the fanfare or “rocket” type, so-called because of the ascending arpeggios of such melodies; a lyrical second theme offers contrast in this substantial sonata-allegro movement. The lovely Romanze adopts the rhythm of the gavotte, but within a piece that invites a luxurious dance: it’s a slow “couple’s moment” on a quiet moonlight night. A paired Minuet & Trio constitutes the third movement, cast in the traditional ternary (three-part) form, while the finale is a Sonata-Rondo movement, with two themes in steady alternation throughout. Its lively initial melody especially conjures the world of comic opera; Figaro or Cherubino could certainly have made good use of it!

Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* came about thanks to a 1735 commission from the Neapolitan Confraternity of the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows, as negotiated through the composer’s employer Duke Marzio Domenico IV Carafa Maddaloni. Its text, a thirteenth-century Latin hymn long associated with the Good Friday liturgy, describes the Virgin Mary’s reaction to the Crucifixion. Poignantly, the composer himself was then suffering with tuberculosis; he died shortly after the work’s completion, prompting Alfred Einstein’s oft-quoted remark that Pergolesi had the “wailing woman standing before him.” The extant manuscript of work reveals a shaky hand, with several passages clarified only in a later set of orchestral parts.

In 1739 the French aristocrat and music critic Charles de Brosses proclaimed this *Stabat Mater* a masterpiece, and he was hardly alone in this assessment. The work was copied widely, including by J. S. Bach, who swapped out its Latin text in favor of a German adaptation of Psalm 51. This is music of vivid drama and sensuality, from a composer attuned to the heightened emotions of opera. Fellow *opera buffa* enthusiast Jean-Jacques Rousseau regarded its first movement as the “most perfect and most moving that has ever come from the pen of any composer.”

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. Ms. Panthaki’s 2019/20 orchestral season included returns to both Minnesota Orchestra (*Messiah*) and Winter Park Bach Festival (Brahms *Requiem*) and performances with Houston Symphony (*Messiah*), Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, St. Thomas Church in New York, and Santa Fe Pro Musica (Telemann’s *Passion Cantata*).



Jay Carter is recognized as one of the nation’s finest countertenors and is a leading interpreter of Baroque repertoire, lauded for his luminous tone and stylish interpretations. He has appeared with many acclaimed conductors, including Masaaki Suzuki and the Bach Collegium Japan, Nicholas McGegan leading the St. Louis Symphony, and Daniel Hyde with the Choir of Men and Boys, St. Thomas Church, and has performed in many top performance venues. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Missouri Kansas City Conservatory. He earned a Master’s in Music from the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music, and an undergraduate degree from William Jewell College, where he studied with Arnold Epley. Carter is on the voice faculty of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, where he leads Kantorei, an early music chamber choir. He also serves as Artistic Advisor for the Kansas City chamber choir Musica Vocale.



Ars Lyrica Artistic Director **Matthew Dirst**, recently described in the *Washington Post* as an “efficient, extremely precise conductor who has an ear for detail,” 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 and the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition. Widely admired for his stylish playing and conducting, Dirst leads a period-instrument ensemble with several acclaimed recordings, one of which—J. A. Hasse’s *Marc Antonio e Cleopatra*—was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2011 for Best Opera. 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. His publications include *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marburg to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and *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 in its original context while creating connections to contemporary life. Ars Lyrica's acclaimed programming features neglected gems alongside familiar masterworks, and extracts the dramatic potential, emotional resonance, and expressive power of music. Its local subscription series, according to the Houston Chronicle, "sets the agenda" for early music in Houston. Ars Lyrica appears regularly at international festivals and concert series because of its distinctive focus, and its pioneering efforts in the field of authentic performance have won international acclaim, including a Grammy nomination for Best Opera.

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Idyll & Intrigue

May 21, 2021 | 7:30 pm

Our final program of the season features a delightful cantata a due by the youthful George Frideric Handel.

A 1708 commission from the Arcadian Academy, *Aminta e Fillide* tells the story of two lovers who need a little help from Cupid. Handel fleshes out this endearing pastoral courtship for two voices and strings with great panache and charm. Its arias proved so popular that he reused some of them the very next year in *Agrippina*.

Join us for this timeless retelling of an ageless love story as we bring our 2020/21 Side by Side season to a harmonious conclusion.

- G. F. Handel, *Aminta e Fillide*

This concert will be broadcast virtually.



Abigail Fischer
soprano



Lauren Snouffer
soprano