

SOUNDING LEGACIES



SPRING/SUMMER 2023

Matthew Dirst
Artistic Director

JAN 29, 2023
4:00 PM & 5:30 PM

FROM CHINA WITH LOVE

MAR 26, 2023 4:00 PM

CLORI, TIRSI, E FILENO

MAY 13, 2023 7:30 PM

SONGS OF ZION

ARS
LYRICA
HOUSTON 

CLORI, TIRSI, E FILENO



SUNDAY | 4:00 PM
MARCH 26, 2023

Zilkha Hall, The Hobby Center for
the Performing Arts

ORCHESTRAL PERSONNEL

Oboe/recorder	Geoffrey Burgess Pablo Moreno	Cello	Barrett Sills Eric Taeyang Mun
Bassoon	Benjamin Kamins	Violone	Deborah Dunham
1st Violin	Stephen Redfield, <i>concert master</i> Maria Lin Kurt Johnson Hae-a-Lee	Theorbo/guitar	Michael Leopold
		Harpichord/ conductor	Matthew Dirst
2nd Violin	Oleg Sulyga, <i>principal 2nd</i> Alan Austin Andrés Gonzáles Anabel Detrick	Surtitles	Jenna Wallis
Viola	Erika Lawson Yvonne Smith		

CLORI, TIRSI, E FILENO

PROGRAM

Clori, Tirsi e Fileno

George Frideric Handel

(1685–1759)

CAST (in order of appearance):

Lauren Snouffer	<i>Tirsi</i>
Key'mon Murrah	<i>Clori</i>
Cecelia McKinley	<i>Fileno</i>

PART I

Overture

Aria (Tirsi): *Cor fedele*

Recit. (Tirsi): *Povero Tirsi*

Aria (Tirsi): *Quell'erbetta*

Recit. (Tirsi): *Se il guardo non vaneggia*

Aria (Clori): *Va col canto lusingando*

Recit. (Clori, Fileno): *Dubbia così, o Fileno*

Aria (Fileno): *Sai perché l'onde del fiume*

Recit. (Clori): *Vezzoso pastorello*

Aria (Clori): *Conosco che mi piaci*

Recit. (Fileno, Clori): *Dunque sperando in vano*

Aria (Fileno): *Son come que nocchiero*

Recit. (Clori, Tirsi, Fileno): *Se altra pace non brami*

Duetto (Clori, Fileno): *Scherzano sul tuo volto*

INTERMISSION

PART II

Duetto (Clori, Tirsi): *Fermati! / No, crudel!*

Recit. (Tirsi): *Creder d'un angue al sibilo fatale*

Aria (Tirsi): *Tra le fere la fera più cruda*

Recit. (Clori): *Tirsi, mio caro Tirsi*

Aria (Clori): *Barbaro! barbaro, tu non credi*

Recit. (Tirsi, Clori): *Pur cederti mi è forza*

Aria (Clori): *Amo Tirsi*

Recit. (Fileno): *Va, fidati a promessa*

Aria (Fileno): *Povera fedeltà*

Recit. (Tirsi): *Non ti stupir, Fileno*

Aria (Tirsi): *Un sospiretto*

Recit. (Fileno): *Tirsi, amico e compagno*

Aria (Fileno): *Come la rondinella*

Recit. (Clori, Tirsi, Fileno): *Così felici e avventurosi amanti*

Duetto (Tirsi, Fileno): *Senza occhi e senza accenti*

Trio (Clori, Tirsi, Fileno): *Vivere e non amar*

*With thanks to the Moores School of Music, University of Houston,
for use of its John Phillips harpsichord and to St Philip Presbyterian
Church for providing rehearsal space for this program.*

*Thanks also to editor Anthony Hicks and to the Center for Computer
Assisted Research in the Humanities (Menlo Park, CA) for the scores
and parts for this performance.*

CLORI, TIRSI, E FILENO
ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Handel composed *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* in 1707 in Rome, probably for the Marchese Francesco Maria Ruspoli, in whose household the young composer served while perfecting his skill with opera and cantata in the land that gave birth to both. A classic over-achiever, Handel blended the two genres creatively in *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*, whose pastoral libretto signals cantata while its frequent vocal and instrumental fireworks suggest opera. With full orchestral scoring and two substantial halves, each comprising more than a dozen arias or duets, it is among the most sumptuous compositions from Handel's Italian years.

Its stock pastoral characters include the nymph Clori and two love-struck shepherds, Tirsi and Fileno. The same characters appear in countless other Italian cantata libretti from this time and innumerable paintings, most of which make us understand—with barely concealed winks and nods—that Clori permitted certain pleasures before withholding them. Such tales had great appeal for wealthy Roman connoisseurs thanks to frequent papal bans on opera, which opened the door to various kinds of operatic substitutes. The genteel pastoral setup of *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* surely fooled no one at its première in Ruspoli's palace: this is a tale of love, lust, and betrayal, entirely in keeping with the norms of the Baroque opera house—and of Roman society, for that matter, from its founding onwards.

Tirsi sets the stage at the beginning of Part I with tears and denial over Clori's unfaithfulness. Tirsi hides just as Clori enters with Fileno, whose heart is just as battered. Responding to Fileno's similar complaint, Clori announces that pity has turned to love. The onstage lovers rejoice as Tirsi slinks off unnoticed, muttering curses.

Part II opens with Clori in pursuit of a jilted and angry Tirsi, who understandably wants nothing further to do with such a fickle partner. After much bickering, Tirsi relents, accepting Clori's explanation that an actual relationship with Fileno was never on the table. As Clori leaves, Fileno reappears, and both Tirsi and Fileno realize they've been duped by someone they both find hopelessly irresistible.

In the original duet ending for the work, Tirsi and Fileno foreswear the opposite sex and affirm the ostensibly more durable nature of same-sex companionship. In the trio Handel wrote for a subsequent performance in Naples, where the oblique allusion to same-sex love might have caused a stir, Clori returns to join Tirsi and Fileno, all cheerfully observing that "to live and not to love...is not possible." Thankfully, neither the imperfect sentiment of the duet nor that of the trio will get Handel in trouble today, and both endings offer undeniable musical charms. For this performance we therefore offer both.

During Handel's years in Rome, castrati sang most (though not all) female roles in both opera and oratorio. Gender-bending was the norm in the performance of smaller pastoral works as well, with little thought given to the implied sex or sexual orientation of the poetic "speaker"; a great voice trumped any concerns about verisimilitude. Today's performance likewise plays with gender, inverting traditional expectations for all three characters in *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*.

© MATTHEW DIRST

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Austrian conductor, harpsichordist, and musicologist **Mario Aschauer** has made his life's work the interface of music scholarship and performance. He is artistic director of Harmonia Stellarum Houston and has collaborated with early music ensembles such as Mercury Chamber Orchestra, La Follia Austin, Ensemble NovAntique Linz, Harmony of Nations Baroque Orchestra, Ars Antiqua Austria, and L'Orfeo Baroque Orchestra. Mario holds degrees from the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, the University of Vienna, and the Linz Bruckner Conservatory. Upon completion of a post-doctoral fellowship at the Yale School of Music, he accepted a faculty position at Sam Houston State University, where he is currently Associate Professor of Music and Director of the Center for Early Music Research and Performance. He also teaches harpsichord and basso continuo at Rice University and serves as organist at First Lutheran Houston.



Praised by the New York Times as “dramatically astute” and a “stand out” performer, tenor **Steven Brennfleck** has been consistently acknowledged for his consummate artistry, vocal flexibility, and moving interpretations on the operatic and concert stage. His recent operatic credits include performances with the American Opera Projects, the Caramoor Festival, Glimmerglass Opera, Portland Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, The Tanglewood Festival, and the Westminster Opera Theatre in roles including Don Ramiro (*Cenerentola*), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Laurie in Adamo's *Little Women*, Gonsalve in Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnol*, Henrik (*A Little Night Music*), and Tobias Ragg (*Sweeney Todd*).

Highly regarded on the concert stage, Mr. Brennfleck made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2012. His recent collaborations include appearances with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, Austin Symphony Orchestra, Fall Island Vocal Arts Seminar, Georgetown Festival of the Arts, LA International New Music Festival, MET Chamber Ensemble, June in Buffalo Festival, Temple Symphony Orchestra, and the Victoria Bach Festival.



Complimented for his "virile and buzzy baritone", **Mark Diamond** is excited to be returning to one of the companies he considers home, Ars Lyrica Houston. This season you can hear him on the stages of San Antonio Opera, Cincinnati Opera, and Austin Opera. Mr. Diamond is a versatile singer who performs a wide range of operatic roles, concert, and recital repertoire. Highlights from his career include leading roles at

Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Opéra de Limoges, Théâtre de Caen, Opéra de Reims, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Glimmerglass Festival, Seoul Philharmonic, and more. A native of Augusta, Georgia, Mr. Diamond is on the voice faculty at Baylor University and holds degrees from Rice University, University of Houston, and Georgia Southern University.



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 Marpurg to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and *Bach and the Organ* (University of Illinois Press, 2016).



American bass-baritone **Timothy Jones** enjoys a reputation as a charismatic presence on operatic and concert stages throughout the United States, Europe and South America. The Boston Globe hailed his voice as “stentorian and honeyed” and the Chicago Tribune called his “complete connection with the text extraordinary.” The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review praised him for his theatricality, noting that he “relished the dramatic possibilities of the songs’ text and music.” Mr. Jones has soloed with the Cleveland Orchestra singing Handel’s *Messiah* and Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*. He has also performed with Boston Baroque, Baltimore Symphony, St. Petersburg Chamber Orchestra, Austin Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Houston Symphony, and more. His repertoire includes the Bach’s *St. John Passion*, Haydn’s *Lord Nelson Mass*, Mozart’s *Requiem*, *Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9*, Verdi’s *Requiem* and “*A Sea Symphony*” by Vaughn Williams. He has commissioned and premiered numerous compositions by composers including Robert Avalon, James Balentine, Laura Carmichael, John Vasconcelos Costa, Pierre Jalbert, Marcus Maroney, and Kevin Puts. Mr. Jones is an alumnus of Centenary College and the University of Michigan. He is currently a professor of voice at the University of Houston Moores School of Music.



Elijah McCormack, male soprano, has recently garnered praise for his “luminosity” of tone (Washington Post) and “radiant soprano” (Dallas News). He has performed as a soloist and ensemble member all over the United States, with organizations such as the Washington Bach Consort, American Bach Soloists, and Dallas Bach Society. The 2022 season sees his appearance in Haymarket Opera Company’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea* (Amore/Valletto); other recent opera credits include IlluminArts Miami’s *The Turn of the Screw* (Miles), and Lowell House Opera’s world premiere of “*NIGHTTOWN*” (Bell* Cohen). He was a finalist in the Grand Rapids Symphony’s Keller Bach Competition. He received his Master’s degree in Historical Performance at Indiana University, where he studied with Steven Rickards.



A recent graduate of Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, rising contralto **Cecelia McKinley** is thrilled to be returning to Texas to perform with Ars Lyrica. Previously, Ms. McKinley has performed the roles of L'Écureuil in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilège* as well as Narciso in Handel's *Argippina*. This Summer, Ms. McKinley will be a Studio Artist with Wolf Trap Opera, singing the role of Mrs. Ott in Floyd's *Susannah*. Ms. McKinley has also

participated in the Institute for Young Dramatic Voices under the guidance of mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick. Equally passionate about concert work, Ms. McKinley has performed as a soloist with members of the Heifetz Orchestra at the Bach Around the Clock Festival and has sung the solos of Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*, and Beethoven's *9th Symphony* with the James Madison University Symphony Orchestra. Ms. McKinley completed her undergraduate studies at James Madison University, and recently earned her master's degree from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, in the studio of Dr. Robin Rice.



New York born **Manami Mizumoto** started her lifelong relationship with music at age three on the violin. Early exposure to chamber music sparked in her a devoted love of collaboration. This led to a fascination with performing contemporary music and working with living composers. In recent years, this has manifested in being a founding member of the group Nuova Pratica, a collective of composer-performers working with centuries-old practices

of improvisation in the modern day. In addition, Manami is passionate about exploring different approaches to music making in history and how that can transform the way modern audiences relate to music of the past. Her driving curiosity is in exploring the dialogue between ancient and contemporary thoughts, and she is equally at home on the baroque violin, modern violin, and electro-acoustic setups with Ableton Live. Manami is a graduate of the Juilliard School where she earned a Bachelor's with Catherine Cho and Joel Smirnoff, a Masters in Historical Performance, and graduated with the Norman Benzaquen Career Advancement Grant. In 2022, she was selected the newest member of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and continues to be a Fellow of The English Concert in America, elected in 2021.



Key'mon W. Murrah, a countertenor herald for his wide range and “hot coals-core of tone,” is a native to Louisville, Kentucky. In 2021, he was heard on the stage of The Houston Grand Opera as the 1st Place Winner of the 33rd Annual Concert of Arias, Grand Prize winner of the Premiere Opera Foundation + NYIOP International Vocal Competition, and Finalist and Encouragement award winner of Operalia.

Mr. Murrah has performed with the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, Bluegrass Opera, Red River Lyric Opera, American Baroque Opera Co., American Spiritual Ensemble, Florida Grand Opera, Glimmerglass Opera Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Seattle Opera, and Grand Rapids Symphony. Murrah was selected for Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute Masterclass with Joyce DiDonato in 2019. Among other awards, he has won the Encouragement Award for the Metropolitan Opera Council Central District Auditions, 2nd place award for the Emerging Soloists Competition, and 1st place in the Camille Coloratura Competition.

In the 2022-23 season, Mr. Murrah's performances will include appearances with San Diego Opera in *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* and the Théâtre du Capitole Toulouse in the Bach *Christmas Oratorio*.



Scott Rogers is a 24-year-old non-binary countertenor, arranger, and composer who uses they/them pronouns. A native Texan, Scott grew up in San Antonio and attended the University of Houston for their undergraduate studies, receiving degrees in vocal performance and music education. While studying at the University of Houston, Scott made their international debut as a soloist in the University's 2018 Grand Prix winning performance at the

Béla Bartók International Choir Competition as well as their operatic debut as Nireno in the Moores Opera Company's 2022 production of Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Also in 2022, Scott performed as the alto soloist in *BWV3* with Houston's Mercury Chamber Orchestra. Now a graduate student in the University of Notre Dame's Sacred Music program, Scott continues to study and perform works by the masters of the baroque era.



Praised for her “lively personality, abundant charm, and luscious vocalism” (*Chicago Tribune*), and “warm, agile soprano” (*Chicago Classical Review*), soprano **Erica Schuller** is a versatile performer, bringing committed artistry to a broad musical repertory. She has performed leading and supporting roles with the Boston Early Music Festival, Haymarket Opera Company, Apollo’s Fire, Odyssey Opera, Florentine Opera Company, Opera Siam (Bangkok) and Skylight Opera Theatre, among others. As a concert soloist, Ms. Schuller has appeared with Apollo’s Fire, Ars Lyrica Houston, the Lincoln Trio, New Trinity Baroque, Great Lakes Baroque, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Elgin Symphony Orchestra, the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, the San Francisco Bach Choir and Second City Musick Baroque Ensemble. Upcoming engagements include the title role in *L’Incoronazione di Poppea* with Haymarket Opera, and solo performances with Newberry Consort and San Antonio Symphony. Ms. Schuller founded Cantabile School of Voice and Piano in Chicago and teaches voice with the University of Chicago.



Recognized for her unique artistic curiosity in world-class performances spanning the music of Claudio Monteverdi and Johann Adolph Hasse through to Missy Mazzoli and George Benjamin, American **Lauren Snouffer** is celebrated as one of the most versatile and respected sopranos on the international stage.

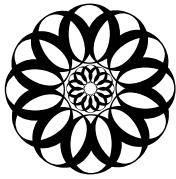
Operatic performances on leading international stages have fortified the soprano’s place as one of the eminent interpreters of contemporary music; she sang the title role of Berg’s *Lulu* in a new production at the Teatro Municipal de Santiago and returned to Houston Grand Opera for the world premieres of *The Phoenix* and *The House Without a Christmas Tree*. Other appearances included Handel’s *Serse* for the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Karlsruhe and the role of Magnolia Hawks in Francesca Zambello’s production of *Show Boat* for The Glimmerglass Festival. An impactful discography includes Hasse’s *Siroe* and Handel’s *Ottone* with George Petrou for Decca, Gottschalk’s *Requiem for the Living* with Vladimir Lande on Novona Records, Grantham’s *La canción desesperada* conducted by Craig Hella Johnson on Harmonia Mundi, and Feldman’s *The Rothko Chapel* with Steven Schick for ECM. An alumna of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Ms. Snouffer holds degrees from Rice University and The Juilliard School.

Ars Lyrica Houston gratefully acknowledges our 22/23 season artist hosts: Sonja Bruzauskas & Houston Haymon, Bettie Cartwright, Elizabeth Duerr, Kinga & Jamie Ferguson, Ed & Janet Hess, Barrett Sills, and Travon Walker.



Dutch soprano **Josefien Stoppelenburg** is best known for her dazzling vocal agility and her passionate and insightful interpretations. Stoppelenburg has performed all over the United States, Europe, Asia, and South America as a Baroque Music and Oratorio specialist, and as a concert singer. Stoppelenburg has performed most major oratorio works by Handel, Haydn, Bach and Mozart. This Fall Navona Records released her CD, 'Modern Muses, contemporary treasures for soprano and cello'. The album won a Bronze Medal in the 2022 Global Music Awards. Stoppelenburg taught vocal masterclasses at Indiana University (Jacobs School of Music), the University of Colorado, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and Illinois State University. She has performed for the Dutch Royal family on several occasions. Josefien is also a painter and is working on illustrating a children's book. To stay posted about her music and art, please visit www.josefienstoppelenburg.com or www.josefienstoppelenburg-art.com.

Ars Lyrica Houston thanks Kathryn and Brendan Godfrey for generously providing the post-concert receptions for 22/23 season performances.



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Kelsey Nanneman & Michael Crosson
Jeffrey Nunn
William Pannill & Molly Hammond
 – *in honor of Joseph Hammond*
Kelly Reynolds – *in honor of*
 Emma Wine
Helen & Jim Shaffer – *in honor of*
 Connie Kwan-Wong
Dr. Wayne Shandera
Hywel Upshall
A.G. Unterharnscheidt
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