

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents

The Open Gates Project

Joe Chappel & Michele Kennedy, Co-Directors

C3: Countertenors, Continuo, and a Consort of Viols

Friday, February 11 at 7pm

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Manhattan

Countertenors:

Biraj Barkakaty

Wei En Chan

Patrick Dailey

Jonathan May

Guest Young Artist:

Iván María Feliciano

Viol Consort & Continuo:

Rosamund Morley, treble viol

Lawrence Lipnik, tenor viol

Motomi Igarashi, bass viol

Patricia Ann Neely, bass viol

Dongsok Shin, harpsichord

Joe Chappel, musical director

**The Open Gates Project is an initiative of
Gotham Early Music Scene, Inc. 340 Riverside Drive, Suite 1A
New York, NY 10025**

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PROGRAM

Prelude and Voluntary William Byrd (1540–1623)

*Viols: Rosamund Morley, Lawrence Lipnik,
Motomo Igarashi, Patricia Ann Neely*

Ambitious Love William Byrd

Jonathan May and Viol Consort

Ye Sacred Muses William Byrd

Patrick Dailey and Viol Consort

Who made Thee, Hob William
Byrd

Wei En Chan, Biraj Barkakaty, and Viol Consort

Sing, Sing Ye Druids Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

*Wei En Chan, Jonathan May, and Viols
Dongsok Shin, harpsichord
Lawrence Lipnik, Gene Murrone, recorders*

Sound the Trumpet Henry Purcell

Patrick Dailey, Biraj Barkakaty, Dongsok Shin, and Patricia Ann Neely

Fantasy à 4 Henry Purcell

Viol Consort

Sorceress Scene, *Dido and Aeneas* Henry Purcell

Guest Young Artist, Iván Maria Feliciano, and Viol Consort

*** PAUSE ***

O Maria Trevor Weston (b. 1967)
Biraj Barkakaty, Jonathan May, Wei En Chan, and Viol Consort

Overture and Gigue, *Serse* G.F. Händel (1685–1759)
Dongsok Shin, Harpsichord

Ombra Mai Fu, *Serse* G.F. Händel
Patrick Dailey, Dongsok Shin, and Viol Consort

Pur Ti Stringo Francesco Cavalli (1602–1676)
*Jonathan May, Wei En Chan, Patrick Dailey, Biraj Barkakaty,
Dongsok Shin, and Patricia Ann Neely*

Pur Ti Miro Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)
Wei En Chan, Jonathan May, Dongsok Shin, and Patricia Ann Neely



About the Program

A personal note from the Co-Directors:

After the success of our first program in November, *The Divine Feminine: Centering Women of Color in Early Music*, Michele and I thought the natural successor to such an offering would be a program centering men of color. Even more interesting, I thought, would be a program featuring the countertenor voice. The fact that this *fach* is underused in modern music seemed like a fitting symbolic connection to OGP's mission of amplifying historically muted and marginalized voices. This would have been a wonderful program on its own, but Michele discovered a compelling piece by American composer Trevor Weston, and the idea expanded to build a program around countertenors and viols – also a largely abandoned instrumentation in modern music. In addition, it would be fun to hear a Baroque treatment of such a scoring alongside a similarly scored modern composition. The Marian theme of Weston's work provides a lovely coincidental nod to the programmatic theme of our all women's program last year. So, as you can see, our original idea developed into the program you will hear tonight in a very organic manner.

We would like to give particular thanks to **Larry Lipnik**, who was key in the curation of our program. His knowledge of viol repertoire combined with his experience as a countertenor were invaluable to our programming.

~ Joe Chappel

The Music

Born in London in 1540, **William Byrd** was a prominent and prolific composer of the Elizabethan era. He was a pupil of the renowned composer Thomas Tallis, with whom he later shared duties as organist of the Chapel Royal, where they jointly published the *Cantiones sacrae* in 1575 as a royal commission. After Tallis' death ten years later, Byrd went on to publish a wide range of English songs and various dance forms, four volumes of both motets and secular music, and an impressive array of liturgical music for the Church of England– most notably the publication of three mass settings.

While Byrd's music for organ and virginal notably elevated the English keyboard style, his compositions for viol consort played a significant role in the musical canon. He especially pioneered the fantasia – an instrumental solo of relatively free form that, in its earlier 16th-century iteration, consisted of short sections that stem from a musical motif or two. Later in 16th and 17th-century England, the fantasia expanded to fugal compositions for consorts of wind or string instruments – one example is Henry Purcell's *Fantasia à 4*, featured later in our program.

Our opening set celebrates the versatility of Byrd's viol consort music with his Prelude and Voluntary – a regal setting showcasing the earthy timbre of the four viols in rich harmony, with a stately rhythmic sensibility and lively points of imitation throughout. We branch from there to several settings for solo voices and viol consort: Byrd's sprightly setting *Ambitious Love*, a lively and dance-like celebration of love as the greatest of all forces, even those of the Gods above. Next we feature Byrd's deeply inward and mournful setting of *Ye Sacred Muses* – whom he petitions to come down to Earth to console those in mourning over the death of his lifelong friend and mentor, Thomas Tallis. Lastly, we present the playful duet *Who Made Thee, Hob, Forsake the Plough* in which two shepherds jest over the distractions of love, as voices and viols dance around one another in playful points of imitation.

Henry Purcell (September 10, 1659 – November 21, 1695) is considered to be one of the greatest English composers who ever lived. It is not until the famous English composers of the 19th and early 20th centuries that any composer born in England enjoyed as much fame and popularity as Purcell. Though his life was short, his sacred compositions for the court and his secular writing for the theater were extensive. As a child, he was admitted as a chorister to the Chapel Royal and later became an assistant to the King's organ builder. In 1679 he was appointed organist at Westminster Abbey (where he is buried, near the organ), replacing John Blow in that position, and his writing for the theater diminished for a period. It would be a decade later when the first documented performance of *Dido and Aeneas* took place. Though never published in his lifetime it was widely shared in private circles and rediscovered and published in the 19th century. This, along with John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, are considered the first English operas, employing the Italianate recitative

style in which the narrative progresses through music and not spoken dialogue. Tonight you will hear examples of his beautiful writing for the voice, including an excerpt from the aforementioned *Dido and Aeneas*, as well his equally beautiful instrumental music written for viols.

Georg Friedrich Händel (February 23, 1685 – April 14, 1759) was a German-English composer representing the pinnacle of the “high Baroque” style. Drawing from his native German influences, as well as perfecting the Italian operatic style and elevating the English oratorio to new heights, Händel is like a compositional compendium of his musical era. He was born in Brandenburg, Germany and then spent some time in Italy, familiarizing himself with and learning to compose in the Italian operatic style. In 1712 he moved to England and in 1727 became an English citizen. His compositional output was exhaustive, producing dozens of operas, several oratorios (including *Messiah*), many orchestral works including *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*.

He was wildly popular during his lifetime, so much so, that even writing an opera as unpopular as the five-performance, never to be produced again box-office failure, *Serse*, did not diminish his popularity. A few days after the first performance of *Serse*, a stone statue of Händel was unveiled to the public. It can still be viewed today at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. He was the first English composer to be memorialized in such a manner.

The opera was no success, but its first aria “Ombra mai fu” remains one of the most beloved of all his opera arias. Modern audiences will hear a very emotive and serious aria, but this was actually Händel employing comical devices by setting the most absurd text to the most beautiful music, as the opera’s namesake, a Persian ruler, sings the wonderful praises of a tree.

This evening you will first hear Händel’s wonderful overture and gigue from *Serse* and then the beautiful moving “Ombra mai fu.” For fun, you might try listening differently to this well-known aria, in the way Händel intended: through a comical lens, more tongue-in-cheek – a difficult task, indeed, with Händel’s suspended, plaintive melody in one’s ear!

Widely acclaimed composer **Trevor Weston** (b. 1967) is a singer, organist, and a Professor of Music at Drew University. Dr. Weston's musical education began at age ten, when he joined the St. Thomas Choir of Men and Boys in New York City. He went on to study at Tufts University and at The University of California at Berkeley, where he earned his doctorate in Music Composition. Weston's honors include the George Ladd Prix de Paris from UC Berkeley, The Arts and Letters Award in Music and a Goddard Lieberson Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and in 2021, he won the first Emerging Black Composers Project sponsored by the San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

In high demand among ensembles across the country, Weston's body of work encompasses a wide range of chamber music, choral settings, and orchestral repertoire. He has been celebrated for his transporting musical language, praised as a "gently syncopated marriage of intellect and feeling". For his *Griot Legacies*, arrangements of four African American Spirituals set for choir and orchestra, Weston was lauded for his "knack for piquant harmonies, evocative textures, and effective vocal writing."

Such praise is also fitting for Weston's setting of *O Maria*, featured in our program this evening. Tonight will mark the premiere of its original arrangement: for solo voice and viol consort. In Dr. Weston's own words:

"Ryland Angel asked me to write a Marian piece for his wonderful project a few years ago. I composed *O Maria* as a reflection of my interest in 14th century Ars Nova polyphony. Specifically, I wanted to create a vocal work with flowing polyphony similar to *De toutes flours* by Guillaume de Machaut. *O Maria* also contains a musical quotation of the medieval conductus, *O Maria*. I discovered this melody by an anonymous 13th-century French composer on the CD *La Bele Marie*. My piece opens with a refrain that returns like a medieval fixed form throughout the development of the work. The last iteration of the refrain presents my melody against the medieval conductus, O maria, O felix".

Born in Crema, Italy in 1602, **Francesco Cavalli** was a composer of the early Baroque period who gained widespread popularity within

his lifetime, particularly for his operatic works. He was a fine singer from a young age, such that the governor of Crema (for whom he is named) became his patron, and helped him to join the choir of Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice as a boy soprano. As he came of age and began to write more music, he studied under Claudio Monteverdi, whose body of work had a great influence on his compositional life.

Cavalli ascended the ranks at St. Mark's as an organist, and his compositions grew from chamber works to larger volumes of sacred settings, to full-scale operas – his operas were widely presented and some were staged abroad in Vienna and Paris, where he was commissioned to write his 1662 opera *Ercole Amante* in honor of the marriage of Louis XIV and Maria Theresa of Spain. It is his celebrated dramatic setting of text that you will hear tonight in his “Pur Ti Stringo”, from his 1667 opera *L'Eliogabalo* – the vocal lines intertwine to illustrate the opening lines, “Now I hold you, Now to you I am tied.” We hear impassioned interjections from each voice to proclaim, in turn: “My joy is as great as ever was my pain.”

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) was an Italian composer, instrumentalist, and choir master, and a towering musical figure of the late Renaissance into the early Baroque period. After spending his early career in the Court of Mantua, he moved to the Republic of Venice and served for the rest of his days in San Marco as *maestro di cappella*. While much of Monteverdi's music unfortunately was lost, his nine books of madrigals live on, as do his larger religious works, including the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* of 1610, and three complete operas. His *L'Orfeo*, commissioned by the Duke of Florence in 1606 and set to a libretto by Alessandro Striggio the Younger, is regarded as the formative beginning of the Western Operatic tradition.

Our selection this evening is a love duet drawn from Monteverdi's last opera, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, which was first performed in Venice's Teatro Santo Giovanni e Paolo in 1643. Its libretto, by Giovanni Busenello, stands out for its emotional vividness and strong sense of character development. (It must be noted that few records exist of this original performance, its libretto, or its public reception, such that the works' compositional origins are a matter of dispute, though it's widely attributed to Monteverdi's operatic canon).

This duet – “Pur Ti Miro” – features the amorous liaison between the Roman Emperor Nerone and his mistress Poppea, whose ambition and drive eventually lead her to be crowned empress. A central feature used here is the Ground Bass, or a short, harmonically driven phrase that repeats, sometimes with slight variation, with melodic lines composed on top of it. In particular, “Pur Ti Miro”’s keyboard part has a descending tetrachord that starts on the tonic, descends four times to the dominant, and then returns back to the tonic. Considered to be an illustration either of impassioned love, the ground bass here helps to propel the singers in an intense expression of passion and longing – note the intertwining lines and the vivid moments of harmonic tension and release. “No more grieving, no more dying, Oh my life, my beloved – I am yours.”

Translations

O Maria, Weston

O maria o felix puerpera mater pia cuius suxit ubera qui creavit sidera: munera de te fluunt dulcia spiritus sancti cratera. Aqua viva clausa semper ianua progressiva stella non occidua ficus sed non fatua rigua paradisi pascua balsamus myrtus oliva.

Translation by Susan Hellauer

O Mary, O happy child bearer, holy mother who nursed the one who created the stars: gifts of sweetness flow from you, chalice of the holy spirit.

Living water, flowing through a door ever shut, star never setting, fruitful fig tree, watered pasture of paradise, balsam, myrtle, olive.

Ombra Mai Fu, Händel

Frondi tenere e belle
Del mio Platano amato,
Per voi risplenda il Fato
Tuoni, Lampi, e Procelle
Non vi oltraggino
mai la cara pace,

Tender and beautiful fronds
of my beloved plane tree,
Let Fate smile upon you
May thunder, lightning, and storms
never bother your
dear peace,

Ne giunga a profanarvi
Austro rapace.

Ombra mai fu
Di Vegetabile,
Care ed amaile
Soave piu.

Nor may you by
blowing winds be profaned.

Never was made
A vegetable (a plant)
more dear and loving
or gentle.

Pur Ti Stringo, Cavalli

Pur ti stringo,
Pur t'annodo,
Meco il fato,
Idol caro,
Crudo avaro non è più
Tant'è la gioia quant'il duolo fu.
pain.

Now I hold you,
Now to you am tied,
To me fate,
My dearest idol,
A cruel miser is no more
My joy is as great as ever was my

Pur Ti Miro, Monteverdi

Pur ti miro, pur ti godo,
Pur ti stringo, pur t'annodo;
Più non peno, più non moro,
O mia vita, o mio tesoro.
Io son tua, tuo son io,
Speme mia, dillo, di.
Tu sei pur l'idolo mio,
Si, mio ben, si, mio cor,
mia vita, si

I gaze upon you, I desire you,
I embrace you, I enchain you ;
no more grieving, no more dying,
o my life, o my beloved.
I am yours, yours am I,
my hope, tell it, tell.
You are truly my idol,
yes, my love, yes, my heart,
my life, yes.

About the Artists

A native of London, **Biraj Barkakaty** has held positions with some of the world's leading choral ensembles including St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, and the Washington National Cathedral Choir. Whilst specializing in the music of Baroque and Renaissance composers, he has also sung roles in many new and contemporary operas, most recently the role of Fidele in *Diary of a Madman* with Seattle's LowBrow Opera Collective last November, and the role of Merlin in the staged world premiere of *The Loathly Lady* at the Vienna Summer Music Festival in Florida last June. In October 2021, Biraj performed with the London-based Siglo de Oro Ensemble at the Tage Alter Musik Festival in Regensburg. He is also a member of the newly formed professional ensemble The Union in Cincinnati. Future engagements include Bach *Cantata 12* with the Heifetz Institute in March, and the role of the Shepherd in Blow's *Venus and Adonis* with Fireside Theatre in Cambridge, England.

Wei En Chan is a Singaporean countertenor whose singing is lauded for its "time-stopping" beauty and technical finesse. He leads an active career in Asia and North America performing the major works of Bach and Handel and has appeared in leading roles with numerous organizations including the Singapore International Festival of Art (SIFA), The Opera People (TOP, Singapore), Bachfest Malaysia, Red Dot Baroque (RDB), First Lutheran Church of Boston, Boston Opera Collaborative, the American Bach Soloists, and others. Highlights include the title role in Handel's *Oreste* with SIFA, conducted by Tian Hui Ng, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with Bachfest Malaysia, conducted by Dr. David Chin, and Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina* with TOP & RDB. Wei En earned his Masters in Music in Voice Performance from New England Conservatory, studying with Dr. Ian Howell, and his Bachelors in Music from Ithaca College, studying with Prof. Carol McAmis.

Patrick Dailey has been described as possessing "a powerful and elegant countertenor voice" (*Los Angeles Daily News*) and as a "vocal standout" (*Boston Classical Review*). He has appeared with the Grand Rapids Symphony, Opera Memphis, Pacific Opera Project, Tête à Tête New Opera Festival (UK), Austin Baroque Orchestra, Shreveport Opera, Chicago Philharmonic, Opera Louisiane, Woodhouse Opera Festival (UK), Il Festival de Ópera Barroca de

Belo Horizonte (Brazil), among others. A versatile artist, Patrick has performed with the likes of Jason Robert Brown and Aretha Franklin and was featured in Ben Gregor's film, *Fatherhood* (FUSE TV) as well as recording projects from Louis York (*American Griots*), Adrian Dunn (*Redemption Live in Chicago*), to The Aeolians of Oakwood University. Patrick is on the voice faculty and director of the Big Blue Opera Initiatives at Tennessee State University, and is founding director of the W. Crimm Singers (aka Wakanda Chorale), and co-founder of Early Music City.

Iván Maria Feliciano, Jr. is an operatic countertenor of Afro-Puerto Rican descent, and is regarded as a rising star in both Baroque Opera and Oratorio. Audiences recently heard Iván as the Sorceress in Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* at the Aaron Copland School of Music. Iván Maria has been described as having a voice that is dramatic in size, that is full, and rich with an extraordinary range. He has made appearances with the SouthWest Symphony Orchestra of Naples, Florida and was a primary soloist within the chamber choir of Ave Maria University. He has also performed scenes from Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, and made his debut as the first countertenor soloist to perform Mozart's *Requiem in d minor* in Southwest Florida. Iván Maria has a profound adoration for Early Music and its abundant musical repertoire. Outside of performing, he also has an avocation for transcribing obscure Baroque repertoire and aspires to be an archivist and Baroque specialist. He is currently completing his degree in vocal performance with the Aaron Copland School of Music.

Jonathan May, countertenor, performs regularly with ensembles including Early Music New York, Mark Morris Dance Group, Ensemble VIII, and The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys. He was most recently featured as a soloist in *Cantatas BWV 70, 147* and Bach's *Magnificat* with Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity. He appeared with New York City's TENET Vocal Artists in uncondacted performances of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, featuring only twelve singers and the instrumental ensemble the Sebastians. He also appeared as Testo in Academy of Sacred Drama's modern premiere of Vincenzo de Grandis' *Il Nascimento di Mose*. Other highlights include appearances as alto soloist in C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificat* with American Classical Orchestra and in Handel's *Dixit Dominus* with Canticum Scholare; singing the role of Spirit in Purcell's *Dido and*

Aeneas with Mark Morris Dance Group; singing Philip Glass' *Madrigal Opera* at National Sawdust; and performing Tallis' *Spem in alium* with The Tallis Scholars. He holds a degree in music from Dartmouth College.

Motomi Igarashi performs the viola da gamba, violone, baroque double bass, and lirone with various groups such as the American Classical Orchestra, Anima, ARTEK, Parthenia, Orchestra of St. Luke's, and is the Principal Bassist for the Boston Baroque. Graduating from the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music in Japan, she came to the United States and won first place for solo bass at the Aspen Music Festival. Motomi attended The Juilliard School during which time she studied with Eugene Levinson. After graduating she went to Europe to study viola da gamba with Marianne Muller, Paolo Pandolfo, and lirone with Erin Headly. Motomi also appears on contemporary albums with jazz pianist Brad Mehldau (lirone), and Natalie Merchant (gamba). She is the instrument custodian for the Gamba Society of America rental program.

Lawrence Lipnik has performed with many acclaimed early music ensembles from Anonymous 4 to Piffaro and the Waverly Consort, and is a founding member of the viol consort Parthenia and vocal ensemble Lionheart. He has served as gambist and recorder player for staged opera productions including Monteverdi's *Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* at Wolf Trap and Telemann's *Orpheus* with the New York City Opera, and has prepared an authoritative edition of Francesco Cavalli's *La Calisto*, commissioned by The Juilliard School. Recent performance highlights include concerts with lutenist Paul O'Dette of Dowland's complete *Lachrimae* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, concerts at the Venice Biennale and Berkeley Festival, appearances with the Venice Baroque Orchestra, the Folger Consort, ARTEK, TENET, the Indiana University Historic Performance Institute at the Bloomington Early Music Festival and early opera residencies at Carnegie Mellon University. He is a contributor to *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists*, and *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, as well as the journal *Comparative Drama*.

Rosamund Morley performs a wide-ranging repertoire on all sizes of the viola da gamba family with renowned ensembles as diverse as ARTEK, The Boston Camerata, The Crossing, The Folger Consort, Piffaro and the Yale Schola Cantorum under Masaaki Suzuki. She is a member of Parthenia, New York's premiere consort of viols, with which she enjoys playing both early and new music. For many years she toured worldwide as a member of the Waverly Consort. She has played Vivaldi with the Venice Baroque Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Charpentier at the Brooklyn Academy of Music with Les Arts Florissants, and 13th-century motets on tour in Europe with Sequentia. She studied in her hometown of Toronto and at the Royal Conservatory of Music in The Hague.

Patricia Ann Neely is an early bowed string player and music teacher. She holds a BA in music from Vassar College and an MFA in Historical Performance from Sarah Lawrence College. She has performed with many early music ensembles including Sequentia, Tempesta di Mare, Washington Bach Consort, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, Rheinische Kantorei Köln, among others. She is currently director of Abendmusik – New York's early music string band. Patricia has been a member of the Board and Chair of the Equity and Diversity Task Force of the Board of Early Music America and is currently on the Board of the Viola da Gamba Society of America and Chair of its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. She teaches at many early music workshops and was a long-time member of the music faculty at The Brearley School, in New York City.

Dongsok Shin performs exclusively on early keyboard instruments and has been a member of the internationally acclaimed Baroque ensemble REBEL since 1997. He has appeared with American Classical Orchestra, ARTEK, Carmel Bach Festival, EMNY's Grande Bande, and Modern Musick among others. He has accompanied artists such as Renée Fleming, Rufus Müller, and Barthold Kuijken. He has toured throughout North America, Europe, and Mexico, been heard on many radio broadcasts, and recorded for many labels. Dongsok has parallel careers as engineer, producer, and editor of audio and video recordings, and as a tuner/maintainer of early keyboards in the New York area. He is harpsichord technician for The Metropolitan Opera, curator of the Flintwoods Collection in Delaware, and often tunes, demonstrates, and performs on the

antique keyboards at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. His YouTube videos performing on the earliest surviving Bartolomeo Cristofori fortepiano of 1720 produced by The Met Museum have over 400,000 views.



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