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Under Arrest: Tales of Classical Music's Most Notorious Felons

Submitted by Pamela Freund



Gold Coast Chamber Players with Soprano Christine Brandes at a concert last January. Photo provided

crimes involves Carlo Gesualdo, who caught his wife and her lover in flagrante and brutally murdered them on the spot. His song, "Moro, lasso, al mio duolo" is mournful yet harmonious, and captures Gesualdo's brooding personality. Johann Sebastian Bach was the victim of a horrible boss, the Duke of Weimar. When Bach accepted a new job offer, the Duke refused to release him on such short notice. As punishment for Bach's insolence, the Duke threw him in jail for a month. The refined nature of Bach's sonatas doesn't even hint at his stubbornness. All told, no one could claim that these composers led boring lives.

The concert will be held at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 23 at the Lafayette Library Community Hall in Lafayette. A pre-concert talk at 7 p.m. with Kai Christiansen will start the evening.

Soprano Christine Brandes, who was praised by San Francisco Classical Voice for her "delicate but tightly focused and superbly accurate voice," will be highlighted in a selection of vocal pieces and arias. An international performer, Brandes has performed locally with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and San Francisco Opera and is known as an expert on Baroque and early classical music. Brandes commented in an interview that Bay Area audiences were especially receptive to early music when it became popular in the 1970s and '80s. As a small subset of mainstream classical music, historical performance meshed beautifully with the alternative ethos of the Bay Area.

Strings and harpsichord make up the core ensemble for "Crime and Punishment." Violinist Mitchell Newman of the Los Angeles Philharmonic will appear, as well as violinist Lisa Weiss of the New Esterhazy Quartet. Harpsichordist and early music specialist Katherine Heater will perform, as well as Gold Coast Artistic Director and violist Pamela Freund, and cellist Eric Gaenslen of the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra.

Ticket price includes complimentary champagne, the pre-concert talk at 7 p.m., and a reception with the musicians following the performance. Tickets are available at www.gcplayers.org and by

phone at (925) 283-3728. Limited seating, reserve early.



Christine Brandes Photo provided

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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