

Boston Early Music Festival

INTERNATIONAL BAROQUE OPERA • CELEBRATED CONCERTS • WORLD-FAMOUS EXHIBITION

Boston Early Music Festival
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Boston Early Music Festival announces the appointment of Melinda Sullivan to the new position of the Lucy Graham Dance Director

Cambridge, MA—The **Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF)** is pleased to announce the appointment of **Melinda Sullivan** to the new position of the **Lucy Graham Dance Director**. The position—named in honor of the late choreographer and frequent BEMF collaborator—will oversee the establishment of the **BEMF Dance Company** as a troupe of professional dancers who will take part in BEMF opera productions and other artistic projects. Ms. Sullivan, a 20-year veteran of BEMF opera productions who has recently served as BEMF Ballet Mistress, joins BEMF's artistic leadership team featuring Artistic Directors **Paul O'Dette** and **Stephen Stubbs**, Opera Director **Gilbert Blin**, and Orchestra Director **Robert Mealy**.

“Baroque dance is inseparable from Early Music and especially early opera,” comments BEMF Opera Director Gilbert Blin. “In her role as Ballet Mistress, Melinda has developed and enhanced both our relationship with a roster of exceptional dancers and the role dance plays in our opera productions. Her new appointment will only enhance the role that Baroque dance will continue to play in all of our staged productions.”

MELINDA SULLIVAN, LUCY GRAHAM DANCE DIRECTOR

Melinda Sullivan danced in her first BEMF production—Purcell's *King Arthur*—in 1995. She returned to dance and assist the late choreographer Lucy Graham in all subsequent BEMF opera productions over the next twelve years. In 2008, Sullivan assumed the role of BEMF Ballet Mistress, training dancers and singers in Baroque and Renaissance style and technique. Her first choreography for BEMF was Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* in 2010 and she has since choreographed extensively for BEMF, including Charpentier's *La Couronne de Fleurs* and *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers*, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, and Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* and *Livietta e Tracollo*.

A graduate of Boston Conservatory, Ms. Sullivan quickly established herself as a dynamic and musical performer in Boston's contemporary dance scene, including with Beth Soll and Co. Her initial studies in Renaissance dance were with distinguished historian and teacher of dance, Dr. Ingrid Brainard, and this led to performances with the Ken Pierce Baroque Dance Company, and further Baroque study and training. At the same time she worked to develop a unique movement and dance program for singers at New England Conservatory, where she taught for 25 years. Since then, she has danced, reconstructed, choreographed, and taught at prominent music and dance festivals, and for universities and opera companies. She is resident choreographer and movement coach at Central City Opera in Colorado, and serves on the faculty at the Boston University Opera Institute. Her recent choreographies have been for Central City Opera, Odyssey Opera, Boston University Opera Institute, and New England Conservatory.

BEMF DANCE COMPANY

The **Boston Early Music Festival Dance Company** (previously known as the BEMF Dance Ensemble), was originally founded in 2010 as an integral part of BEMF's Chamber Opera Series production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. The troupe is made up of a stable company of American dancers and invited guests, and is under the artistic supervision of Melinda Sullivan, *Dance Director*. As Director of the company, she recruits and trains dancers, organizes the practice of technique and style, and supports the work of guest choreographers. The members of the Company perform both noble and character dances in Festival centerpiece operas, annual chamber opera performances and tours, and orchestra concerts. A unique component of the BEMF Dance Company is that it extends invitations to Baroque dance specialists from around the world. This enriches the experience of all the performers by offering opportunities for dance specialists to share their research with the audience while rehearsing and performing at the Festival, and contributes significantly to a deeper knowledge and appreciation of Baroque dance.

LUCY GRAHAM (1953–2016)

Earlier this year, BEMF was saddened to lose a cherished collaborator and dear friend in choreographer Lucy Graham. A graduate of the London College of Dance and Drama, Ms. Graham established herself as a leading exponent and choreographer of early dance over an accomplished career spanning work in Baroque opera, Renaissance spectacles, ballets de cour, and English masques. Her production credits include the Renaissance Dance Company of London, the Sadlers Wells Theatre, Música Antiqua, Hampton Court Palace, Opera Restor'd, and nine productions with the Boston Early Music Festival as choreographer including the World Premiere production of Matheson's *Boris Goudenow* in June, 2005, which she also co-directed. In recognition of her immeasurable impact on BEMF, the new position of Dance Director is named in her honor.

RESOURCES:

Download artist photos: http://www.bemf.org/images/press/1617/hires_melinda_sullivan01.jpg

ABOUT THE BOSTON EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Recognized as the preeminent early music presenter and Baroque opera producer in North America, the **Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF)** has been credited with securing Boston's reputation as "America's early music capital" (*The Boston Globe*). Founded in 1981, BEMF offers diverse programs and activities, including one GRAMMY Award-winning and four GRAMMY Award-nominated opera recordings, an annual concert series that brings early music's brightest stars to the Boston and New York concert stages, and a biennial week-long Festival and Exhibition recognized as the "world's leading festival of early music" (*The Times*, London). The 19th Boston Early Music Festival will take place from June 11–18, 2017, and will feature fully staged performances of André Campra's *Le Carnaval de Venise* as the Centerpiece Opera. BEMF's Artistic Leadership includes Artistic Directors **Paul O'Dette** and **Stephen Stubbs**, Opera Director **Gilbert Blin**, Orchestra Director **Robert Mealy**, and Dance Director **Melinda Sullivan**.

For more information, images, press tickets, or to schedule an interview, please contact Kathleen Fay at 617-661-1812 or email kathy@bemf.org.

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