

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE ST. JOSEPH CHAPEL RECITAL SERIES
AT THE BASILICA OF ST. MARY
PRESENTS:**

**THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES
MUSIC OF HEIRICH IGNAZ FRANZ VON BIBER (1644-1704)**

**LEAH GALE NELSON, BAROQUE VIOLIN
WITH JENNIFER GRIESBACH, HARPSICHORD AND ORGAN**

Brief Description: A recital of 17th century music for violin and keyboard. Selections from Biber's *Mystery Sonatas (c. 1670)*, will be presented in a context similar to their original performance, in an intimate chapel, using period instruments.

Date/Time: Sunday, October 7, 2007 at 3:00 PM

Location: The Basilica of St. Mary, St. Joseph Chapel
Hennepin Avenue between 16th & 17th Streets
Downtown Minneapolis

Admission: Free

(more)

THE PROGRAM

The *Mystery Sonatas* for violin and continuo, by Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (1644-1704), hold a unique place in solo instrumental repertoire. In addition to the virtuosic and often pyrotechnic writing for the violinist, each piece also requires a re-tuning of the instrument, called *scordatura*, providing each of the sonatas its own distinctive character and sonority. Also known as the *Rosary Sonatas*, the beautifully engraved manuscript was originally presented in the form of a Rosary Psalter but in music, complete with an engraved scene depicting each Mystery of the Rosary prefacing each piece. Including music of Johann Jacob Froberger (1616-1667) for solo harpsichord, these concerts offer a rare opportunity to hear Biber's *Mystery Sonatas* performed in a context similar to their original use - in the intimate space of the St. Joseph Chapel at the Basilica of St. Mary.

The First Joyful Mystery: The Annunciation Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber (1644-1704)

Tocatta in No. 2 in D Minor Johann Jacob Froberger (1616-1667)

The Second Joyful Mystery: The Visitation Biber

Fantasia No. 2 in E Minor Froberger

The Third Joyful Mystery: The Nativity Biber

The Fourth Joyful Mystery: The Presentation Biber

Suite No. 20 in D Major Froberger

The Fifth Joyful Mystery: The Finding of the 12-year old Jesus in the Temple Biber

THE PERFORMERS

Leah Gale Nelson, modern and baroque violin, specializes in historical performance practice of the 17th and 18th centuries. She has been called, an "expert in her field" by the New York Times. The Village Voice has referred to her solo playing as "beautiful and engaging," and the Philadelphia press has called her "a rising star in the early music scene." A *semi-coastal* musician based in New York and Minneapolis, she is Concertmaster and Artistic Advisor for *Ensemble Sebastian* and in 2004 was appointed String Artist in Residence at the Basilica of St. Mary. She has worked as concertmaster with Chicago Opera Theater and conductor Jane Glover in critically acclaimed productions in Chicago and New York; as guest director for Lyra Baroque Orchestra in Minneapolis; has led Handel's *Messiah* in countless performances throughout the country; and serves as concertmaster for some of the finest choirs in New York City in repertoire from Monteverdi to Mozart. Ms. Nelson has been a guest lecturer at Columbia University, Vassar College, the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University, and the Schubert Club in St. Paul. She has performed and recorded with leading early music ensembles throughout United States, including Concert Royal, Boston Camerata, Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, and American Classical Orchestra, and has toured in Canada, Mexico and Europe. Born in Texas and raised in

Minnesota, Leah holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Chicago Musical College and a Master of Music degree from the Mannes College of Music in New York. Her violin was made by Sebastian Klotz, c. 1737, and she uses a bow made by violinist Rainer Ullreich of Vienna.

Jennifer Griesbach studied harpsichord with Colin Tilney in Toronto and Davitt Moroney in Paris. She was a founding member of the trio sonata group Sympatica and of Duo Seraphim with soprano Melissa Fogarty and she has appeared with a variety of other ensembles on both coasts of the U.S. Last season she went on tour in Europe with The Wooster Group as a keyboard performer in *La Didone*, an avant-garde theater piece based in part on Cavalli's *La Didone*.

Jennifer is active as an accompanist and vocal coach in New York and is the music director of Grace Episcopal Church in Hastings-on-Hudson, NY. She has taught at the New York Continuo Collective, the Manhattan School of Music and the Amherst and Vancouver Early Music Festivals and given workshops at the New England Conservatory and SUNY Stony Brook. She is also active as a stage director for opera. Her 2007-8 season includes directing shows at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, SUNY Stony Brook and Seattle Baroque Orchestra and assistant directing for The Wooster Group and Indianapolis Opera. Jennifer holds a performing diploma from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and Ph.D. in music history from the University of California at Berkeley.

THE SERIES

The St. Joseph Chapel Recital Series at the Basilica of St. Mary is part of the centennial celebration this season. This monthly series offers short (about an hour) Sunday afternoon concerts of instrumental and vocal repertoire, presented by professional musicians in the artistically rich Basilica community. The performances are free of charge and open to the public.