

## MUSIC

ALLAN KOZINN/THE EARLY MUSIC

## At Last, New York Gets to Brag

PERIOD-instrument players and early-music singers who live and work in New York have been saying for years that they are tired of hearing how much livelier the early-music scene is in Boston. And although they knew, in their heart of hearts, that the claims for Boston were not entirely untrue, they also took the view that a big, splashy event — something on the order of the Boston Early Music Festival — could show their work in higher relief.

The 10-day New York Early Music Celebration in October was not as well financed or as high profile as the Boston festival, but it offered about 60 events, presented mostly in churches around town. They included concerts by many of the city's most active specialist groups, including Early Music New York (which revived its Grande Bande, a chamber orchestra, for a Handel program), Artek, Lionheart, Parthenia, Pomerium, Rebel and the Mozartean Players.

New ensembles and student groups took the opportunity to win attention, and savvy organizations from the mainstream musical world — the New York City Opera, for one, which presented Rameau's "Platée" during the festival — applied for and were granted temporary membership in the fold. (On the other hand, the surprisingly unsavvy New York Collegium, the five-year-old period-instrument orchestra, opted out, even though one of its concerts coincided with the festival.)

The celebration included a screening of a 1960's-vintage television production of the medieval musical play "The Play of Daniel" by the pioneering Noah Greenberg and the New York Pro Musica, and an ensemble competition overseen by Early Music America. (The winner was Asteria, a voice and lute duo specializing in Renaissance song.)

What the event needed to compete with the one in Boston was an ambitious scholarly symposium or two, and perhaps an opera production using the talents and knowledge of the musicians who spend their lives in this repertory. The Early Music Foundation, which organized the festival, is planning another for next fall and possibly an expanded version for 2006.

A scene from "Platée" at New York City Opera, which coincided with the early music festival.



Carol Rosegg