

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2011 AT 8:00 P.M.
ST IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH
NEW YORK CITY

Gotham Early Music Scene, Inc.

Presents

THE GEMS PROJECT 2011

■ PARTHENIA

BEVERLY AU, *bass viol*

LAWRENCE LIPNIK, *tenor viol*

ROSAMUND MORLEY, *treble and great bass viols*

LISA TERRY, *tenor and bass viol*

with guests

DANIEL ELYAR and MARIKA HOLMQVIST, *violins*

DANIEL SWENBERG, *lute*

LUDI MUSICI: Musical games and theatrical chamber music c.1600

Suite a 6 in G Paduan ~ Galliard ~ Allemande	William Brade
Canzona super Cantionem Gallicam “Est-ce Mars?”	Samuel Scheidt
Suite a 4 in C Paduan ~ Galliard ~ Courante dolorosa ~ Allemande	Scheidt
Canzona super O Nachbar Roland	Scheidt

THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL COMPLEXITIES of the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) are enough to confuse the most detail-oriented historian; its terrible devastation, especially in Germany, was the worst Europe has known. While religious conflict, mainly between Catholics and Lutherans, had been raging for decades, armed hostilities, which were ultimately to change the texture of European music as much as it did the German map, had just begun to flare up when the music on this program was written and published.

Trace elements of a proto-Baroque style were working their way north from Italy – basso continuo, solo instrumental accompaniment to vocal music called “stile concertato” – but essentially composers were drawing upon established Renaissance polyphonic traditions, especially in light music. William Brade’s *Neue ausserlesene Paduanen und Galliarden* (1614) and Scheidt’s *Ludi Musici* (1621) were collections for dancing, entertainment, or accompaniment to dinner – indeed “Ludi Musici” might well be translated “Musical Diversions.” Many of these pieces were theme-and-variations, or “divisions” upon a ground, at which viol virtuoso Brade was held to be exceptionally skilled.

Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672), Johann Hermann Schein (1586–1530), and Samuel Scheidt (1587–1654) were recognized as the pre-eminent German composers of their day. Born fewer than three years apart, they all knew and valued each other (Scheidt was godfather to Schein’s daughter) and had occasion to collaborate on certain projects, but their destinies were anything but similar. It was to Samuel Scheidt, devoted native of Halle, that Fate was most cruel.

At seventeen he was already principal organist at a major church in Halle, and was sent to Amsterdam to study with Sweelinck. Returning after a year, he worked under Kapellmeister William Brade, as well as with Schütz and Michael Praetorius, at the court of the Margrave of Brandenburg. When Brade left in 1620, Scheidt inherited his position. Prosperous years ensued: he had a stable of ten instrumentalists, a choir, and five solo singers. Before 1625 he had published eight books of music: organ works, old-style motets, concerted sacred works for massed voices and instruments, and three volumes of *Ludi Musici*. Unfortunately, due to the depredations of the war, only the first volume (1621) survives.

Abruptly in 1625 his patron left Halle to join the Danish forces against the Holy Roman Empire. Scheidt was left with no funds, and his stable of musicians sought their fortunes elsewhere. He eked out a living teaching, playing weddings, selling the occasional collection of

compositions, and overseeing the repair of organs. War brought famine and plague: Halle, like many German cities and principalities, eventually lost more than half its population, and in 1636 all four of Scheidt's children succumbed to the Black Death. What remains of his work from this period until his death, is, like the late work of Schütz, necessarily modest in scale, if not lost altogether.

William Brade (1560–1630) belonged to an earlier, more fortunate generation. Like many English virtuosos of his day, he made much of his career abroad, mostly in Hamburg, where the effects of the Thirty Years' War were not so severe, but frequenting Copenhagen, Berlin, Bückeberg, Gottorf, and Halle. Most of his published dances are in five parts – only his 1614 collection is in six.

– *Lucy Cross*

PARTHENIA is a quartet of viols which animates ancient and contemporary repertoires with a ravishing sound and a remarkable sense of ensemble. Lauded as "local early-music stars" by *The New Yorker*, Parthenia is presented in concerts across America in such venues as Bargemusic, Music Before 1800, the Harriman-Jewell Concert Series and the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, collaborating with the world's foremost early music specialists. The ensemble actively commissions and premieres works by today's outstanding composers. Parthenia is represented by GEMS Live! Artist Management, and records on the MSR Classics label. For more information, visit parthenia.org.