



Crescendo presents:  
**Carissimi's *Jephte* and *Missa L'Homme armé***



On March 23 and 24, 2024 the award-winning music organization Crescendo will present its seventh concert of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary season: dramatic sacred vocal music of the early Italian Baroque.

This program features some of the great vocal repertoire from before the era of Bach and Vivaldi: works by Giacomo Carissimi. Carissimi – who continued Claudio Monteverdi's legacy of dramatic vocal music – tells the story of a human tragedy in one of the first oratorios, *Jephte*. Oratorios became very popular in early 17th-century Italy partly because of the success of opera and the Catholic Church's prohibition of spectacles during Lent. The Israelite general Jephte and his people celebrate a great military victory, and then sink into despair over the loss of Jephte's beloved daughter. Like in later oratorios and opera, the main characters are sung by soloists: a tenor and a soprano. The role of narrator is filled by solos, duets, and ensemble and choral numbers. Among the latter is the famous "Plorate filii Israel" (Weep, oh ye children of Israel), a lament for six voices by the daughter's companions, in which they bewail her misfortune. This oratorio leaves nothing to be desired, as it presents the full spectrum of emotions, from joy, triumphal exaltation, love, and tenderness, to fear, anger, desperation, and sadness, and finally resignation.

Crescendo's Founding Artistic Director Christine Gevert remarks about the second work on the program, *Missa L'Homme armé*: "Carissimi's twelve-voice mass of the early Baroque is based on the famous medieval folk tune 'The Armed Man.' The popular tune is present in each of the five movements. *Missa L'Homme armé* is the last of more than 40 masses composed on this tune over 170 years, and also the one with the largest cast of musicians. Singers and instrumentalists are divided into three groups in the Venetian polychoral style. This type of music, for which Giovanni Gabrieli was famous, creates a lively dialogue by alternating responses of spatially separated groups on stage – a real sonic experience not to be missed!"

The musicians who present these works are: Crescendo Vocal Ensemble of thirty singers with soloists Pablo Bustos, tenor (*Jephte*) – Rochester, NY; Christina Kay, soprano (*Filia*) – New York, NY, Douglas Williams, bass (*Historicus*), Jordan Rose Lee and Sarah Fay, sopranos, and Laura Evans and Tuesday Rupp, altos. Crescendo Period Instrument Ensemble: Christa Patton, Baroque harp and recorder; Hideki Yamaya, theorbo, Rachel Begley, dulcian and recorder, and Jane Hershey, Anne Legêne and Erica Warnock, viola da gamba. The ensemble is directed by Christine Gevert from the organ.