

kallisti  
presents  
chamber opera

 UC San Diego  
Division of Arts & Humanities



featuring the music of  
SCIARRINO  
& STROZZI

# Sino alla morte

Susan Narucki, director  
Stephen Lewis, conductor

Department of Music  
Conrad Prebys Music Center

May 7, 9, & 10, 2014  
7:00 p.m.

Experimental Theater

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# SINO ALLA MORTE

a c o n s t r u c t e d o p e r a

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**Salvatore Sciarrino**

from *Come Vengono Prodotti gli Incantesimi*

Rachel Beetz - flute

**Barbara Strozzi**

*Le tre grazie a venerare*

*Amor non si fugge*

*Godere e tacere*

Bonnie Lander, Sara Perez, Tina Tallon, Kirsten Wiest - sopranos

**Salvatore Sciarrino**

from *Hermes*

Michael Matsuno - flute

**Barbara Strozzi**

*Lagrima mia*

Tiffany Du Mouchelle - soprano

**Salvatore Sciarrino**

*Le donne di Trachis*

Tiffany Du Mouchelle, Bonnie Lander, Sara Perez,  
Alice Teyssier, Tina Tallon, Kirsten Wiest - sopranos

**Salvatore Sciarrino**

from *Canzona di Ringraziamento*

Ine Vanoeveren - flute

**Barbara Strozzi**

*Sino alla morte*

Alice Teyssier - soprano

**Barbara Strozzi**

*Begli occhi*

*Le Tre Grazie a Venerare*

Bonnie Lander, Sara Perez, Kirsten Wiest - sopranos

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*kallisti*

Artistic Director - Susan Narucki

Cello - Jennifer Bewerse

Flutes - Rachel Beetz, Michael Matsuno, Ine Vanoeveren

Guest Musical Director - Stephen Lewis

Lighting Designer - Jessica C. Flores

Makeup/Hair - Danielle Rogers

Dresses - Cora Kempermann

*Sino alla morte* is a “constructed opera”; it pairs music by two Italian composers, Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677) and Salvatore Sciarrino (1947- ) and is inspired by Sophocles’ *The Women of Trachis*.

We focus on part of the play and on several characters. In the beginning, Queen Deianeira is lamenting the absence of her husband, Heracles. His visits to her and their children are infrequent, and she suffers from his neglect. A messenger arrives to tell her that Heracles is victorious in his recent battle and will soon be home. A group of beautiful young women accompany the messenger; he tells Deianeira that they are inhabitants from a vanquished city and have come to serve as slaves. Yet when Deianeira observes them, a strange compassion overtakes her. The glance of one young woman, in particular, pierces her heart.

Deianeira approaches the young woman, and when they regard each other, the queen becomes convinced that something is wrong. An old man approaches Deianeira: he needs to tell her the truth. Heracles has vanquished the foreign city, not for riches or political gain, but because he is in love with Iole - the very same young woman who has captured Deianeira’s attention. Deianeira is shaken; while she does not blame her husband or Iole for the passion that they feel, she is now lost.

Deianeira possesses a potion, made from the blood of a minotaur, who once ferried her across a river. Overcome with lust, the minotaur attempted to violate her midstream, but was interrupted by Heracles, whose arrow pierced the monster’s breast. As he was dying, the minotaur told Deianeira to make a potion of the blood pouring from his breast. If she were ever to doubt Heracles’ love, that potion in contact with his skin, would bring Heracles back to her, and her alone. Against her better judgment, Deianeira makes a dye from the potion; she stains the interior of a cloak and orders that cloak to be given to Heracles. No other man must wear it.

After the cloak is on its way, Deianeira observes a piece of wool she used to dye the cloak; it has disintegrated and in the place where it was, a bubbling acid remains. She realizes she has been deceived. The minotaur sought to kill Heracles, and unwittingly, she has allowed this to occur. She cannot endure life without Heracles and kills herself.

What is the impetus for juxtaposing the music of Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677) and Salvatore Sciarrino (1947 - )? Beyond the common understanding of the musical genre, the word “opera” literally translated, means “deed” or “work”. *Sino alla morte* is best understood in this context. In the work, we bring together two composers who have written vocal music of profound expressivity and intense beauty.

Sciarrino’s rarely performed vocal sextet *Le donne di Trachis* (1980) is the heart of the evening. Written for unaccompanied female voices, it presents an overview of the entire story, from the point of view of the chorus of women, so integral to the play - commenting on the action, providing words of solace and providing perspective on the tragedy. It is an evocative score, full of understated expressivity and sonic richness that is extremely compelling. When I discovered it among the offerings in our wonderfully rich collection of scores at UC San Diego, it set my imagination on an unexpected journey.

At the same time, I had been listening to the music of Barbara Strozzi. Strozzi’s life would be considered extraordinary in any age. She had the artistic and intellectual freedom to pursue a life in music, as a composer and as a virtuoso singer. Without the support of the Church or the patronage of nobility, she was nonetheless one of the most widely published composers of her day.

As I listened to Strozzi’s music, both the early works, delightful and full of light, to the profoundly moving late solo cantatas, I wondered what a “conversation” between the music of these two composers could bring. *The Women of Trachis*, with its timeless story of the love and desire, seemed a place where both worlds might meet. By bringing them together around a central narrative, some possibilities are lost - for example, the delicious double meanings integral to texts of Baroque music (i.e. equating death with the ecstasy of physical love). But Strozzi’s virtuosic late cantatas also seemed to speak to the rich psychology of Deianeira: a woman who could not blame her husband and his lover for their passion, yet risked and lost all, for love.

-Susan Narucki

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## BIOGRAPHIES

### **TIFFANY DU MOUCHELLE, Soprano**

Soprano Tiffany Du Mouchelle is well known for her musical versatility, electric stage presence and exceptional dramatic sensibilities. She is most recognized for her fearlessness in exploring new and challenging repertoire, featuring over 20 different languages (including: Arabic, Japanese, Mian, Russian, and Swedish). In November 2006 she made her Lincoln Center debut as a soloist at Alice Tully Hall, performing *Shadowwinner* and *Black Anemones* by Joseph Schwantner, with the Mannes Orchestra under the baton of Maestro David Hayes, as the grand-prize winner of the Mannes College Concerto Competition. As a concert artist, her broad spectrum of repertoire includes: Baroque cantatas; new music premiers; Art Song by such composers as Rachmaninoff, Strauss, Ravel, and Bellini; folk songs from around the world; musical theater ballads; cabaret theater works; and opera arias. Her performances span the globe from NYC to California, Egypt, Iceland, and Papua New Guinea.

### **BONNIE LANDER, Soprano**

Bonnie Lander is a vocalist who specializes in the performance and presentation of contemporary music. She has collaborated with many composers, improvisers, computer musicians, jazz musicians, rock musicians, and classical musicians with the belief that no one genre can be responsible for the growth and forward motion of amazing new music. She is a founding member of Baltimore based chamber group Rhymes With Opera - whose mission is centered on the commission and premier new vocal repertoire from young, emerging composers. Currently a DMA candidate at UC San Diego in the studio of Susan Narucki, Bonnie has also received a MM and GPD at Peabody Institute for Voice and Computer Music Performance studying under Phyllis Bryn-Julson and Dr. McGregor Boyle, as well as a BM in voice from the University of Miami Frost School of Music in the studio of Dr. Esther-Jane Hardenbergh. She is the only graduate who has twice received the Phyllis Bryn-Julson Award for the Commitment to and Performance of 20th/21st Century Music at the Peabody Institute.

### **SARA PEREZ, Soprano**

Sara Perez is a vocalist primarily dedicated to contemporary music and especially interested commissioning and bringing new composers to the forefront. Her background is in both classical and jazz vocals and has performed with Oberlin's Contemporary Music Ensemble as well as several jazz ensembles at Oberlin. In summer 2012, she toured with her quartet Ensemble f0, a concert which included three commissioned works by composers Lewis Nielson, David Bird and Eugene Kim. Festivals that Sara has performed in include NEC's SICPP (2012) where she performed Cage's *Aria*; and *soundSCAPE* (2011) where she was coached by performers such as Aiyun Huang and Thomas Rosenkranz. She has worked closely with composers such as Lewis Nielson, Christian Wolff, Lansing McLoskey and Brian Hulse. In October 2012, Sara will be premiering Marek Polik's vocal quintet with Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble. Currently Sara is pursuing her Masters at UCSD under the tutelage of Susan Narucki.

### **ALICE TEYSSIER, Soprano**

Lyric soprano Alice Teyssier brings "something new, something fresh, but also something uncommonly beautiful" to her performances. Hailed as possessing a voice with "unusual depth," Ms. Teyssier's mission is to share lesser-known masterpieces with a wider audience. Ms. Teyssier was recently featured on a San Diego Symphony Masterworks concert; James Chute of UT San Diego wrote that her performance of Fauré's *Requiem* and Villa Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras* "commanded your complete attention." She was praised for her "strong, committed performance" in *kallisti's* production of Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, an opera written in a concentration camp and the cause for the composer's eventual demise. A uniquely gifted advocate for new music, Ms. Teyssier collaborates tirelessly with young composers to create new works for the singing voice. In January, she sang in a "triumphant" performance of Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians* at Disney Hall with the Bang on a Can All-Stars. She has given residencies for composers and performers of new music at such universities as Harvard, Leeds, Huddersfield and SUNY-Buffalo. In 2009, she sang the US premiere of Salvatore Sciarrino's *La perfezione di uno spirito sottile* on Los Angeles' renowned Monday Evening Concerts series. In 2008, Ms. Teyssier was "haunting" in the United States premiere of Olga Neuwirth's opera *Lost Highway*, after the David Lynch film, at Columbia University's Miller Theater. The Australian-born singer has lived in France, the United States and Germany and continues to perform on all continents.

**KIRSTEN ASHLEY WIEST, Soprano**

Soprano Kirsten Ashley Wiest is “a new music natural” committed to the continuous evolution of classical vocal music. Her “wonted skill and poise” has led to working with many living composers including Ben Johnston, Denis Kolokol, Ellen Reid, and Jeffrey Holmes. Kirsten often gives World Premiere performances of young composers’ works, and presented the Los Angeles premiere of John Cage’s *Ryoanji* at REDCAT with the CalArts New Century Players. Kirsten has sung as a soloist with wild Up new music collective, UCLA John Cage Symposium, CalArts NCP, and Chapman University’s New Music Ensemble. She has also performed with The Industry - LA’s home for experimental opera, La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, the Metroplex Opera Company in Dallas, and the Texas Ambassadors of Music. Currently a DMA student at UCSD under the instruction of Susan Narucki, Kirsten holds an MFA from California Institute of the Arts and a BM cum laude from Chapman University’s Conservatory of Music, where she was awarded the New Music award for her outstanding commitment to the performance of contemporary works.

**TINA TALLON, Guest Vocalist**

Tina Tallon is a composer and vocalist currently pursuing a doctoral degree in composition at UCSD. A frequent soloist with the MIT Concert Choir, MIT Chamber Chorus, and New Music Brandeis, she received an Emerson Scholarship in 2010 to study voice while completing a degree in biological engineering at MIT. After graduating, she was invited to sing the role of The Mother in the MIT Chamber Chorus’ production of Amahl and the Night Visitors. Since then, she has performed with Bang on a Can, Collage New Music, and at the Cortona Sessions for New Music in Cortona, Italy. Her primary teachers include mezzo-soprano Pamela Dellal and soprano Kerry Deal.

**JESSICA C. FLORES, Lighting Designer**

Jessica C. Flores has worked and toured as a production manager, stage manager, lighting designer, and technical director for a variety of artists and projects, including productions with Oregon Symphony, Eugene Symphony, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Northwest Dance Project, Tulsa Ballet, Pilobolus, the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, international touring with members of New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre, as well as Harvard University where she served as production supervisor and lighting designer to the Dance Program for the Office for the Arts and professional stage manager for Hasty Pudding Theatricals 159 & 160. As an AGMA Stage Manager, Jessica has called productions for the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the Martha Graham Dance Company and the Joffrey Ballet, among others. Jessica has been the Production Manager for UC San Diego’s Department of Music since 2011.

**STEPHEN LEWIS, Guest Music Director**

Stephen Lewis (b. 1983) is a composer, pianist, and conductor originally from Western Massachusetts. Stephen has performed contemporary and classical music in solo and ensemble concerts at Miller Theater in New York, Severance Hall in Cleveland, the Walt Disney and Zipper Halls in Los Angeles, as well as at smaller venues throughout the United States. He has been commissioned by or written works for UC-San Diego’s Palimpsest, the Diagenesis Duo, ensemble et cetera, Downbeat Means Attack, Trio Kobayashi, and a number of individuals. An outstanding collaborative pianist, Stephen is in demand as a professional accompanist and vocal coach. Stephen is currently a PhD candidate in Composition at UC-San Diego, where he studies with Rand Steiger. He also plans on earning his DMA in Contemporary Piano Performance, studying with Aleck Karis. Stephen is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where he majored in both Composition and Piano Performance.

**SUSAN NARUCKI, Artistic Director**

American soprano Susan Narucki has appeared with the Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Netherlands Opera, San Francisco Symphony, MET Chamber Ensemble, on the Great Performers Series at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall with conductors such as Boulez, Levine, Salonen, Tilson Thomas, de Leeuw and Knussen. A dedicated advocate of the music of our time, Ms. Narucki has enjoyed close collaborations with many of the world’s major composers; her extensive discography includes both a Grammy Award and Grammy Nomination for Best Classical Vocal Performance. Increasingly, Ms. Narucki has turned her attention to creating projects that introduce modern music to audiences outside traditional concert hall settings and which illuminate broader issues in society, including the critically acclaimed chamber opera *Cuatro Corridos*, which addresses the subject of human trafficking across the U.S.-Mexican border. Her work has been supported by major grants from the Creative Capital Foundation, the MAP Fund for the Performing Arts/Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the University of California and the National Endowment for the Arts. She serves as Professor and Associate Chair of the Department of Music at the University of California, San Diego where she directs the ensemble *kallisti*.

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# SINO ALLA MORTE

a c o n s t r u c t e d o p e r a

May 7, 9, 10 - 2014 @ 7 p.m.

Experimental Theater / Conrad Prebys Music Center / UCSD

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**This program is dedicated to the memory of Thomas H. Falk, Ph.D.**

Together with his wife Julia, Professor Falk was a member of the New Music Society, Friends of New Music and a longtime supporter of the Department of Music.

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**Special thanks to:**

Rand Steiger, Chair, Dept. of Music  
Barbara Jackson, MSO Dept of Music  
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Isaac Valenzuela, Public Events Managers  
Chelsea Largoza, Audience Services Manager  
Marcelo A Flores-Lazcano  
Chenyu Wang, Follow Spot Operator

Josef Kucera, Chief Recording Engineer  
Joel Polizzi, Recording Engineer

Stage Crew: Daniel Chan, Brian Covarrubias, Thuy Dinh, Olivia Harbough, Daniel Kim,  
Peter Ko, Tiffany Lee, Isabella Neustadt, Chenyu Wang, Gigi Yip

Box Office / Front of House Crew: Esther Gudiel, Nhuxuan Ho, Nicole Interiano,  
Anthony Johnson, Peter Ko, Sarah Schwartz, Kimberly Vazquez



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A black and white photograph of a city skyline at night, with numerous skyscrapers illuminated and their lights reflecting on the water in the foreground. The sky is dark, and the overall mood is serene and urban.

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