

Review**Apollo's Fire Young Artists Concert
at St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights (March 15)**

by Daniel Hathaway



Much of the classical music world still operates on the time-honored apprentice system, which emphasizes hands-on training over degrees and diplomas. Apollo's Fire showcased four of its young artists in two concerts last weekend. I caught the performance on Saturday evening, March 15 in Tucker Hall at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights. Billed as "Music Collision: Art Meets Folk, 1614," the hour-and-a-half performance featured soprano Madeline Apple Healey, violinists Augusta McKay Lodge and Cynthia Black, and viola da gambist David Ellis in various solo and ensemble combinations supported by AF artistic director Jeannette Sorrell at the harpsichord and Daniel Shoskes on lute and theorbo.

Healey, who debuted with AF at the age of 16 in Praetorius's *Christmas Vespers*, brought a clear, strong tone to Morley's *O mistress mine* and the Renaissance song *Jjon come kisse me now*, and showed both fine dramatic sensibilities and vocal fluency in Purcell's *Sweeter than roses* and *Hark the ech'ing air* (in the latter, she was backed up by the full ensemble in an arrangement by AF cellist and gambist René Schiffer).

Ellis, a recent Oberlin graduate who has toured nationally with AF in Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos*, played Tobias Hume's solo gamba piece, *Death*, with bittersweet sensitivity, then joined Lodge in a thrilling performance of Marin Marais's repetitive but endlessly inventive *Sonnerie de Ste. Geneviève du Mont-de-Paris*. Lodge started her relationship with AF as a "Musette" at the age of 13, then was inspired to take up the baroque violin as a student at Oberlin.

Black's moment in the spotlight was provided by Heinrich Biber's *The Assumption of our Lady* from the *15 Sonatas on the Mysteries of the Rosary*. After a humorous demonstra-

tion of *scordatura* (re-tuning the violin's open strings), she played the emotionally labile piece with virtuosity and humor — it ends with Mary ascending with a pop from the violin and a few cadential notes from the *continuo*. Black has performed with AF as a violist (her instrument as a master's student at CIM), but took up baroque violin at CWRU under Julie Andrijeski.

In the second half of the program, the players divvied themselves into different groups for Marco Uccellini's *La Bergamasca* (fast fiddling over a three-note bass Ellis noted that he and Shoskes would be playing a total of 63 times), Dario Castello's *Sonata Concertante IV, Libro II* (a relatively somber and meditative piece with theorbo accompaniment) and two Monteverdi vocal pieces featuring Madeline Healey. *Laudate Dominum (Selva morale e spirituale)* and two *Scherzi musicale Damigella tutta bella*, which led directly into *O rosetta che rosetta*. The impassioned sacred piece provided a lovely contrast to the infectious, fast-paced secular number and brought a well-conceived and masterfully-executed program to a satisfying conclusion.

Apollo's Fire's four apprentices made a splendid impression both as soloists and team players on Saturday evening, and earned an enthusiastic ovation from the large audience. The supply chain for new members of Apollo's Fire is firmly established and producing admirable results.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com March 18, 2014