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Dunbar Early Music Festival to Present Rare Piccinni Opera Nov. 17-18

EVANSTON, Ill. --- The Northwestern University School of Music's Evelyn Dunbar Early Music Festival will present, as its centerpiece, Niccolò Piccinni's rarely performed opera *La buona figliuola* ("The Good Girl" or "La Cecchina") at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17, and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, in Cahn Auditorium, 600 Emerson Street, on the Evanston campus. Sung in Italian with English super titles, both performances will mark the opera's first fully-staged presentation in the United States using period instruments, pitch and tuning.

Complementing the performances will be a panel discussion on Piccinni's opera that will take place at 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, in Lutkin Hall, 700 University Place.

A comedic masterpiece, *La buona figliuola* was composed by Piccinni in 1760 on a commission from the city of Rome. The opera created a furor, quickly becoming the most popular and performed work of the 18th century. The libretto, written by Carlo Goldoni and based on Samuel Richardson's 1740 novel *Pamela: Or Virtue Rewarded*, was published in London. It tells the story of a forbidden love between a nobleman and his beautiful, virtuous gardener. Issues of class are raised, similar to those raised later by Mozart in his opera *Le nozze di Figaro*. *La buona figliuola* was premiered in the United States in 1967, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has since only been performed a few times in this country.

The panel discussion about the opera will feature James Turner, a Samuel Richardson scholar and professor of English at the University the California-Berkeley; Professor Dinko Fabris, musicologist and head of "Casa Piccinni" (the Italian research institute for composer Niccolò Piccinni) at the Conservatorio di Bari in Italy; and Associate Professor Cindy Gold of Northwestern's department of theatre. Panelists from the School of Music will include Professor Robert Gjerdingen, specialist in 18th century musical style, and Associate Professor Jesse Rosenberg, specialist in 19th century opera. Professor Thomas Bauman, musicologist and chair of the department of music studies at Northwestern, will moderate.

The Evelyn Dunbar Early Music Festival was founded in 1998 through a generous gift of Ruth Dunbar Davee, in memory of her sister Evelyn. Its purpose is to combine informed performance and scholarly inquiry. A schedule of festival events follows:

Evelyn Dunbar Early Music Festival Schedule

Performances of Niccolò Piccinni's rarely heard opera *La buona figliuola* ("The Good Girl" or "La Cecchina") with libretto by Carlo Goldoni and based on Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela: Or Virtue Rewarded*, 7:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17, and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, Cahn Auditorium, 600 Emerson St., Evanston campus. Stage director, Noel Koran; music director and conductor, Stephen Alltop; period costumes, Elizabeth Shaffer; period sets, Jackie Penrod; lighting, Jackie Reid. Ticket prices for each performance are \$15 for the general public; \$12 for senior citizens and Northwestern faculty and staff; and \$5.50 for full-time students.

Panel Discussion on Niccolò Piccinni's opera *La buona figliuola*, 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, Lutkin Hall, 700 University Place, Evanston campus. Panelists will include Dinko Fabris, professor, Conservatorio di Bari in Italy and head of "Casa Piccinni"; Robert Gjerdingen, Northwestern University School of Music professor of music studies; Jesse Rosenberg, Northwestern University School of Music associate professor, clinical, music studies; Cindy Gold, associate professor, Northwestern's department of theatre; and James Turner, a Samuel Richardson scholar and professor of English at the University of California-Berkeley. Professor Thomas Bauman, a musicologist and chair of the department of music studies at Northwestern's School of Music, will moderate. Admission is free. Tickets are not required.

For more information, or to order opera tickets, call Pick-Staiger Concert Hall at 847-467-4000 or visit www.pickstaiger.com.

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