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# Piedmont Baroque Consortium to perform Antonio Lotti's lost work

By Michael J. Solender  
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David Tang could barely contain his enthusiasm while discussing his project leading the Piedmont Baroque Consortium in the premier of a lost masterwork, "Gloria" in C No. 1 by 17th-century Italian composer Antonio Lotti.

Tang recently finalized the details for performing and recording the lost work discovered by European colleague Ben Byram-Wigfield, a musicologist Tang has been working with to scout intriguing pieces of music for the group he leads.

The consortium will perform Jan. 17 at St. Ann's Catholic Church in Charlotte, Jan. 18 at St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Davidson and Jan. 19 at Centenary United Methodist Church in Winston-Salem.

Lotti's work has a directness and accessibility that Tang described as refreshing and ebullient, a treat for audiences who may not be familiar with his work or this style, which uses text from the ancient Mass as the libretto.

Tang has been searching for just the right piece to perform and record since the Piedmont Baroque Consortium was assembled in 2012. Then, they performed and made a recording of George Frideric Handel's Messiah for WDAV, Davidson College's classical radio station.

"We discovered we loved working together," said Tang, "and almost immediately set about finding another project that would challenge us and offer something special for our audiences."

Lotti (1667-1740) was a prolific Baroque composer, particularly with opera and sacred music. The discovered

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**What:** Piedmont Baroque Consortium performs "Gloria" in C No. 1 by Antonio Lotti and works by J.S. Bach and Georg Muffat.

**When:** 7 p.m. Jan. 17, St. Ann's Catholic Church, 3635 Park Road, Charlotte; 7:30 p.m. Jan. 18, St. Alban's Episcopal Church, 301 Caldwell Lane, Davidson; 7:30 p.m. Jan. 19, Centenary United Methodist Church, 646 W. Fifth St., Winston-Salem.

**Tickets:** Prices vary by performance and range from free (children/seniors) to \$15. Seating available at the door but limited.

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piece was only recently found by Byram-Wigfield through his British-based publishing house, Ancient Groove Music.

Byram-Wigfield noted that Lotti's style was typical of the best of the late-Baroque era, with some touches of the forthcoming Classical style. "He was a major influence on Handel, in whose work there are many direct "borrowings" from Lotti, said Byram-Wigfield. "He was part of the Venetian tradition from composers such as (Giovanni) Gabrieli, (Claudio) Monteverdi and (Francesco) Cavalli."

"The music is rich and luscious in its use of harmony, agonizing in its use of discords before the relief of their resolution," said Byram-Wigfield, "Lotti is a master of fugues and he writes beautiful melodies, accompanying them with bold rhythmic textures."

Charlotte Baroque enthusiasts and lovers of choral music are undoubtedly familiar with Tang, 47, as he has been a fixture for nearly two decades in Charlotte's musical scene.

He was director of the Oratorio Singers of Charlotte, the combined choruses of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra from 1996 to 2004 and was associate conductor of the Charlotte Symphony from 1998 to 2003. Many know Tang for his work leading the popular Charlotte-based choral group, Carolina Voices. He is currently director of music at Sharon Presbyterian Church.

The Consortium is a project comprised of several regional ensemble groups and is operating as part of the Firebird Arts Alliance, a nonprofit arts organization whose goal is to build community and make better art through such collaborations.

The choral groups brought together for the performance are VOX, the Centenary United Methodist Church Chamber Choir (Winston-Salem), The Greensboro Vocal Consort and The North Carolina Baroque Orchestra (Davidson). The group will be making a recording that should be available this spring.

"Singers absolutely love the piece," said Tang, who noted that some listeners may liken the style to (Antonio) Vivaldi as it is up-tempo, light and airy. "A defining characteristic of Lotti is his cyclical use of dissonance and release."



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