

## A Quick Portrait of The Boston Camerata

**Founded in 1954**, The Boston Camerata was associated until 1974 with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. From 1968 to 2008, Joel Cohen directed the ensemble's teaching, research, recording and concert activities. Since the autumn of 2008, the Boston Camerata's Artistic Director has been French-born singer and scholar, Anne Azéma.

Camerata began touring overseas in 1974, and has maintained an international presence ever since. In recent seasons, Camerata has been heard in Canada, England, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Singapore, and Israel. In the United States, Camerata has participated in early music festivals at Berkeley and San Antonio, as well as in many of the biennial Boston Early Music Festivals. The ensemble has maintained an extensive touring schedule across the entire United States. Camerata's second, third and fourth invitations to the renowned Tanglewood Festival came in 1992, 1994 and 1995, respectively. Other important Camerata appearances include, among others, Lincoln Center, New York, The Brooklyn Academy of Music and the Smithsonian Institute, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, Cité de la Musique, Paris, Palau de la Música, Barcelona.

Camerata undertook its first Japanese tour in 1995; it gave its first Scandinavian performances in 1996. The group's first invitation to participate in the Kalamazoo Medieval Institute came in 1997. A widely praised national tour of *Cantigas* in 2000 marked Camerata's first collaboration with the Sharq Arabic Music Ensemble; the two groups appeared together again in Paris in 2007. Camerata celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2005 with festive productions in Boston (Boston Early Music Festival) and Paris (Théâtre de la Ville). At the latter appearance, then director Joel Cohen was decorated by the French government.

Performed in collaboration with the Tero Saarinen Company, *Borrowed Light*, a dance production using Shaker songs, has toured extensively in Europe, America, (France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, United Kingdom, USA) since 2004, with a south Asian tour recently completed in 2008, to critical acclaim.

Additional Camerata tours of early music repertoires are scheduled for 2009-2010 in the US, Germany, and France.

**Media appearances** by the Boston Camerata have included a nationally syndicated radio series in the U.S. and numerous broadcasts on French, English, Canadian, Dutch, Spanish, Swiss, Norwegian, Swedish, Israeli, Australian and New Zealand radio. The ensemble has made several appearances on French television; in the spring of 1992 its video production of the Roman de Fauvel was telecast nationwide in France. In the United States, Camerata provided the music for *Guardian of Memory*, a 1993 TV project for the Library of Congress. Camerata's video of *Shall We Gather at the River* received numerous "plays" on American cable television during the winter of 1992-93. *Simple Gifts* (1995), and *The Golden Harvest*, (2007) the group's Shaker music projects, have been the subject of extensive coverage on national television, on American public radio and the BBC.

The Boston Camerata's numerous [recordings](#) on the Erato, Harmonia Mundi, Nonesuch Telefunken, Glissando, and Warner Classics labels have received worldwide distribution. In 1989, Joel Cohen and the Camerata were awarded the coveted *Grand Prix du Disque* for their recording, based on original

sources, of the medieval *Tristan and Iseult* legend. This now-historic recording was re-released in the spring of 2008. Camerata's recorded performance of Jean Gilles' *Requiem* became a bestseller in Europe during the spring of 1993. The CD recording of the ensemble's 1992 Tanglewood Festival program, *Nueva España: Close Encounters in the New World*, was released in autumn, 1993 to critical acclaim in both Europe and America. *Simple Gifts*, a recording of Shaker spirituals and chants was the number one bestseller on the national Billboard magazine classical chart during later 1995 and early 1996. Three new releases in 1996, *Dowland--Farewell, Unkind: Songs and Dances; Trav'ling Home: American Spirituals 1770-1870*; and *Carmina Burana* each won critical acclaim in the European musical press; the Dowland recording was nominated in January, 1997 for the French *Grand Prix des Discophiles*. The Boston Camerata's most recent new recording, *A Mediterranean Christmas*, (Warner Classics) became an international bestseller during late 2005. *A Boston Camerata Christmas*, a three CD compilation of earlier recorded repertoire, appeared on Warner Classics in late 2008, and a co-ordinated series of Americana re-releases by Camerata also appeared on Warner Classics in early 2009.

The Boston Camerata is frequently invited to participate in educational projects: masterclasses, lectures and colloquia. An annual summer workshop in Medieval Song was produced by The Boston Camerata in Coaraze, France, from 1996 to 2005. During the autumn of 2007, Camerata was in residency at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. This semester-long residency, under the auspices of the university's Marco Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, was the group's most extensive and ambitious educational project to date. The Boston Camerata has participated in the first international colloquium of Camerata Mediterranean at Saint Guilhem le Désert, France, in June 2009.

## **Anne Azéma**

**Anne Azéma**, the newly appointed **Artistic Director of The Boston Camerata**, is one of the world's leading interpreters of early vocal music. She has been acclaimed by critics on four continents for her original, passionate, and vivid approach to songs and texts of the Middle Ages. De Volkskrant, an Amsterdam publication, noted that "Azéma is, in her genre, as great as Callas or Fischer Dieskau." Ms. Azéma has also been widely praised in many other repertoires, from Renaissance lute songs to Baroque sacred music to twentieth century music theatre.

Since 1993, Anne Azéma has been not only the performer but also the creator of her programs. She researches and edits the repertoire, frequently transcribing the material herself from original sources. Ms. Azéma's most recent work is the staged production of *The Night's Tale: A tournament of Love*, the result of a residency at the Arsenal Metz during the 2004-2007 seasons. The CD of this production was issued late in 2007 in France, to critical acclaim.

Anne Azéma has sang and co-directed programs for the Boston Camerata. She has been a soloist with numerous ensembles, large and small, early and contemporary. She is also the co-founder of the Camerata Mediterranea, and currently directs her European based ensemble, AZIMAN. Her recent festival invitations as a soloist, recitalist or director include Amsterdam, Graz, Dresden, Leipzig, Utrecht, Spoleto, Seville, Versailles, Jerusalem, Berlin, Boston, Bergen, Ambronay, Utrecht, Casablanca, Perth, Wellington, Kyoto, Tanglewood and Tokyo.

Among her teaching activities are master classes, seminars and residencies at conservatories and universities in France, Holland, Mexico and the U.S. She has contributed articles to scholarly and general audience publications. Recent U.S. residencies include semesters as Distinguished Artist in Residence at both the University of Oregon, Eugene, and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She has been guest lecturer at Boston University, McGill University, the University of Georgia (Athens), the University of Wisconsin (Milwaukee), and the Boston Conservatory of music. In Europe, she has taught and directed master classes at conservatories in Amsterdam, the Hague, and Tilburg (Netherlands), Metz and Strasbourg (France). In the company of philologist and Professor Emeritus Pierre Bec, and colleagues Joel Cohen and Shira Kammen, she co-directed the well-known summer course in medieval monody at Coaraze (France, 1997-2006).

Ms Azéma's current discography numbers about thirty five recordings on the Erato, Harmonia Mundi, Virgin, Nonesuch, Bridge, Calliope, Atma, K 617 and Warner labels (Grand Prix du Disque, Edison Prize).

**For more information on The Boston Camerata, please visit:**

[www.bostoncamerata.org](http://www.bostoncamerata.org)

**The Boston Camerata is represented in the U.S. by its own Administration:**

**The Boston Camerata – Concert Management**

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