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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND  
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
PRESENTS

Neumann Lecture On Music:  
*“Cipriano de Rore  
and the Search for Music Drama”*

Dr. Jessie Ann Owens, speaker

Monday, February 2, 2015  
7:30 p.m.  
Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music



Jessie Ann Owens is professor of music and former dean of the Division of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of California, Davis. She will be visiting professor at Villa I Tatti in Fall 2015. A musicologist specializing in Renaissance and early modern music, she is author of *Composers at Work: The Craft of Musical Composition 1450-1600* (1997), the first systematic investigation of compositional process in early music. She has held fellowships from the American Council of



Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the Huntington Library. She served as President of the American Musicological Society and the Renaissance Society of America. Before coming to UC Davis in 2006, she taught at the Eastman School of Music and Brandeis University, where she served as Dean of Arts and Sciences. She was elected Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2003, and Honorary Member of the American Musicological Society in 2008. She is currently co-editing Thomas Morley's 1597 *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Musicke* and working on a book about Flemish madrigal composer Cipriano de Rore and dramatic representation in sixteenth-century music.

Her lecture, "*Cipriano de Rore and the Search for Music*," examines how music historians have puzzled over the prominence Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) assigned to Cipriano de Rore (1516-1565), ascribing to him a role in the discovery of "*seconda pratica*" or the Second Practice. While it is not easy to understand precisely what this term might mean, it is clear that Monteverdi has sensed a turn to a new set of compositional values.

We can see in de Rore's setting of *Dissimulare etiam sperasti*, Dido's lament from Book IV of Vergil's *Aeneid*, the musical representation of a figure who would become a great operatic heroine. Indeed, the composition finds musical ways to portray Dido's emotional state and to create her voice. The recognition of this piece as a small-scale musical drama prompts further investigation of his musical inventions.

De Rore's musical arsenal is multi-faceted. Working with a vocal ensemble typical of sixteenth-century music, he creates the perception of dramatic speech, in effect a single voice, through his use of transparent texture and supple rhythm. Leaving behind the traditional eight-mode system in which he composed in his early years, he discovers radical tonal gambits that help define dramatic moments, like the well-known use of contrasting keys to represent a lover departing at dawn. His compositional strategies take the text itself as a point of departure; the number of times de Rore chooses to set direct speech, in a variety of genres, is surely significant and worthy of further study, as is his focus on texts that create small-scale scenes.

The discovery of de Rore's strategies for creating Dido's dramatic utterance—a fluid homophony, an affective manipulation of the tonal palette and the enactment of a range of emotions—sets the agenda for a re-examination of his entire oeuvre in ways that have never been done before.

