



**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
EARLY MUSIC NEWS**

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## FROM THE EDITOR

If you are reading this, you're probably inspired by early music. This inspiration energizes us to attend early music concerts and possibly to play or sing early music ourselves. A special few are inspired to compose new music in the old style, perhaps even for early instruments. One such composer is Glen Shannon, author of this month's feature article, "Composing in the Neo-Baroque Style." If you ever wanted to understand how a fugue works, this is a "must read"!

March 21 was Early Music Day in Europe. This year's ambassador for Early Music Day was the flamboyant young French harpsichordist Jean Rondeau, whom our own Laurence Vittes was fortunate enough to interview recently. Curious to know how J.S. Bach's Chaconne for Violin sounds through the mind of Johannes Brahms as realized by a harpsichord? Read "Early Music Day – Jean Rondeau" to find out!

Be sure to check "Things to Come" for upcoming events outside Southern California and the "Concert Calendar" and the SCEMS on-line calendars [www.earlymusicla.org/calendar](http://www.earlymusicla.org/calendar) for more information on performances right here that you won't want to miss.

Thank you for your support of early music in Southern California!

Sincerely,

John L. Robinson

Editor-in-Chief, *Southern California Early Music News*  
[newsletter@earlymusicla.org](mailto:newsletter@earlymusicla.org)

# EARLY MUSIC DAY—JEAN RONDEAU

Laurence Vittes

Between March being Early Music Month as proclaimed by Early Music America and Europe proclaiming March 21 to be Early Music Day, there's been a lot of wonderful early music making going on.

This year's ambassador for Early Music Day was the flamboyant young French harpsichordist Jean Rondeau. He explained that March 21 marks both the spring solstice and the anniversary of J.S. Bach's birth. This year's Early Music Day featured more than 100 events across Europe, bringing together celebrations marking Leonardo da Vinci's 500th birth anniversary, Venetian boat songs, a concert in an observatory, Baroque DJ-ing, and an eight-hour musical marathon in Copenhagen. William Christie and Les Arts Florissants performed Bach's *St John Passion* on tour at the Barbican Centre in London and also in Madrid. Vox Luminis appeared in London's Wigmore Hall, and Christophe Rousset continued touring Legrenzi's racy *La Divisione del Mondo* in Nancy (France), Brighton (UK), Stockholm, and Copenhagen.

I emailed Rondeau a few questions in early March.

**LV:** Since when does early music last until 1800 — and even beyond?

**Jean Rondeau:** In fact, it is more by necessity and through a combination of rather complex circumstances that we have come to associate

so-called “ancient” music with so-called “Baroque” and “Renaissance” music and, above all, to associate these terms with musical styles and closed-off periods. However, none of this is very fair, both historically and also according to the meaning of these definitions. When we talk about early music, we should logically talk about this music from the past as opposed to

“non-contemporary” music created in the present. This is where the momentum around early music should be. It is, in my opinion, a movement and not a school, *i.e.*, an evolving stream of reflection on the interpretation of early music, which includes all the music of the past and which allows today's performers to question to a considerable extent the ways of interpreting works from the past. We seek to know how

to place ourselves in relation to understanding the historical context, the language of music, its style, the issues of instruments, musical writing, and so on, and knowing how to place oneself in relation to all this. This allows, unlike a school, for constant reflections on interpretation. In my opinion, it is a movement that has done and is doing a lot of good for musical performances!

**LV:** Is it just about playing on old instruments? How determinant is it that early music be played on period instruments?

**Jean Rondeau:** I think it is very important to ask about instruments; in other words, understanding the instruments that the composer wrote for. It brings us closer to



the author of the work and to the historical context in which s/he wrote it. However, questions about instrumentation go hand in hand with the question of where music was played. Composers of the past wrote for certain instruments in certain contexts and for certain places and audiences. What is important is to understand all this and what we are doing with it. Nothing is forbidden if there is a deliberate thought process behind it — or even if there is not actually one! Playing Mozart on a modern piano today is obviously not forbidden, but then maybe you should position yourself as a performer of a transcription.

**LV:** What does the Early Music Day ambassador do?

**Jean Rondeau:** He thinks about these questions and tries to answer them!

**LV:** What is the sponsoring organization REMA and how extensive are its activities?

**Jean Rondeau:** REMA is the European Early Music Network. It has over eighty-five member organizations in twenty countries, all of them being either festivals or concert halls. In addition to conferences, REMA organizes and coordinates projects such as the Early Music Day and the REMA Early Music Awards. REMA is funded through its members, and is supported by the French Culture Ministry and the European Commission through the Creative Europe program. REMA's office is in Versailles, France, at the Centre de Musique Baroque.

**LV:** Did you write that your ambassadorship will be “an opportunity to invite young people” because you're young?

**Jean Rondeau:** I think that my ambassadorship is more to say “early music is a movement rather than a school.” By treating early music as a movement, it will evolve and have a future. There is obviously a strong link with youth. If I want to increase audiences and in particular

make them younger, it is simply because audiences (mainly in Western countries) are quite old. It would be interesting if they were more cohesive and more balanced — and I speak socially as well!

**LV:** I see you're ending your Carnegie Hall recital with Brahms's arrangement of the Bach Chaconne. What was the thinking behind playing it on a harpsichord?

**Jean Rondeau:** Actually, this Brahms transcription of Bach's Chaconne for Violin BWV 1004 is a transcription made for left-handed piano only. Unlike Ravel, Brahms did not dedicate this transcription to a war amputee who was missing an arm. Rather, it is for all musicians who wanted to feel the same sensation of technical difficulties that a violinist might feel while playing this piece through playing this transcription. He wrote this in a letter to Clara Schumann. However, since the transcription was for the left hand only, Brahms could not afford to deviate too far from the original version. Thus, transcribing for piano mainly involves marking dynamics and expressions. On the harpsichord, I obviously play it with both hands (not having a sustain pedal that allows me to support the harmonic flow) and I play in a medium-low register that gives the harpsichord its full power, so we suddenly find ourselves very close to the violin. It's a very good exercise to try to make the harpsichord sing as much as possible!

When I was a child, I often turned pages during recitals given by Blandine Verlet, my teacher. I remember very precisely when I was seven or eight years old turning pages while she was playing this chaconne in this transcription. I even think it was the first time I ever heard this work for the harpsichord! I remember being struck by it, and, once the recital was over, I rushed to the harpsichord to decipher it immediately!

# COMPOSING IN THE NEO-BAROQUE STYLE

Glen Shannon

My composition style has acquired the label “neo-Baroque.” Though it is modern music, it generally follows the rules of voice leading, harmony, and counterpoint from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—but modern times allow me to relax and even occasionally ignore those rules. A brief familiarity with the most basic rhetorical devices of the period lends a Baroque flavor as well. My approach to composition uses chords, cadences, bass lines, and simple rhythms as building blocks, and derives its interest from the creative use of scales, patterns, and counterpoint (intertwined melodies). I use familiar chords and avoid dissonances on strong beats unless they resolve quickly, usually at cadences. Like the genuine Baroque music that inspires it, my neo-Baroque music is very key-centric, with non-threatening intervals and a focus on melodic and contrapuntal details.

In addition to the style of music, the instruments I like to use tend to be historical as well, mainly recorders, but also Baroque violin, viola da gamba, Baroque flute and oboe, and harpsichord. I keep in mind the features of the instruments, their strengths and weaknesses, and do not write music that is not possible to play well. As I discuss later, the absence of keys on early wind instruments such as the recorder can naturally steer passages away from technical complication.

One of my favorite Baroque forms to write is the fugue (Latin *fugare* “to chase”). Developed from the earlier forms like the canon, a fugue is like an elaborate round, with many more rules but also many creative opportunities. Fugues are fun to write because their imitative nature provides ready-made material for musical expansion: steal from what you’ve written earlier, and if you get stuck you can just throw in the *subject* (main melody) and stretch it just a bit longer. I will explore fugal writing later in this article.

## Starting Early

When I was in the eighth grade near Buffalo, NY in 1979-80, I played the Bb bass clarinet in the school band. One of the pieces we performed that year was simply called “Concerto Grosso”—which turned out to be a wind-band arrangement of part of the first movement of Antonio Vivaldi’s Concerto No. 11 for 2 violins from *L’Estro Armonico* Op. 3, something I didn’t learn until many years later. The bass line starts the fugue in that concerto; I loved it so much I had completely memorized my part by concert time. I loved the mathematics in the scalar runs up and down that started and ended on the perfect notes at the perfect time. I loved the suspensions that resolved, and particularly the bass role in the cadences. I especially loved the fugue-ness of it all, further enhanced by the fact that it started in the bass, which was my part, and built upward.



At the time, I didn't know anything about music beyond how to play the written notes on a clarinet (and recorder, which we all learned in the third grade at my school), but that year was also the year we learned the circle of fifths in music class. I completely internalized this material. To my amazement, the circle of fifths is a key feature of the Vivaldi fugue; it's built right into the subject melody. (See Figure 1) Playing this piece sparked something in me. I asked, "Why do we have to play notes written by somebody else? What's stopping me from writing my own notes?"—as if music is only legitimate if it was written by a famous and established composer. This way of thinking wasn't actually much of a stretch for me, since my two older siblings are very musical as well. As teenagers, my sister was already an excellent guitar player and songwriter; my brother already a serious drummer. Later touring the world with rock bands, he now teaches audio engineering and has a sound-recording studio in his home. We have non-musical parents, but they were always supportive of our musical pursuits.

could use that phrase as the subject, then resort back to it and keep the piece going.

## Fugal Analysis and Example

**Figure 1**

Here is an example of a complete top-down exposition, in five parts, from my Prelude & Fugue No. 1 in D Minor

(first prize winner in the 1997 composition contest sponsored by the Chicago Recorder Society):

## Fugue

Excerpted and condensed from Prelude & Fugue No. 1 in D Minor, SMM100

Glen Shannon  
(1986-)

Andante  $\text{♩} = 42$

51 Subject

10 1st Countersubject

15 Codetta

Answer in dominant key

29 2nd Countersubject

Free melody

Subject in original key

25 3rd Countersubject

1st Countersubject (modified)

Answer in dominant key

35 Motivic repetition

3rd Countersubject

Final entry of Subject in original key

Motivic repetition

Motivic repetition

First big Cadence!

bass with each higher voice entering in turn. Voices can also enter from the center and move outward, *e.g.*, alto-tenor-soprano-bass. Once all the voices have entered, there is usually a cadence that closes the exposition.

The next section is called an *episode*, musical material after the

exposition that comes between new statements of the subject. Fugues can have any number of episodes, but usually a minimum of two. Common techniques to build episodes include: sequential repetition of a motive, often derived from a recognizable snippet of the subject; free imitation among the

voices using material suggested by the subject or not; or counterpoint with interchange, meaning at least two melodies overlaid one above the other, constructed in such a way that they can swap melodies and still sound good together. As each episode appears, a different technique is employed or material from previous episodes is reworked. As long as the music is never the same twice, anything goes.

*Middle entries* of the subject separate the episodes. Interest can be added by having the subject appear in a related key, such as the relative major or minor. There can be any number of statements of the subject in this section, including a completely new version of the exposition. In later middle entry sections as the fugue progresses, interest can be created by a fun technique called *stretto*: consecutive

entries of the subject in close proximity. The closer the *stretto*, the more tightly wound the music grows.

After as many occurrences of episodes and middle entries as desired, the fugue enters the *final section*. Here is where everything comes

to a head. Using tools like very close *stretto*, an interchanged form of the exposition, presenting the subject in new ways either through inversion (upside down), harmonic alteration or rhythmic diminution/augmentation (twice/half speed), and—my favorite—the pedal point, tension is built up to a climax that leads to the release at the final cadence. The term pedal point is taken from organ music, as the foot pedal is held down on usually the dominant (for example A in the key of D) while music churns above, extending the anticipation

and delaying the final release. In the Vivaldi fugue, the pedal point goes on for twelve measures!

## Writing for Recorders

Recorders, as well as Baroque flutes and oboes, have a special set of considerations to keep in mind when writing for them. They have, for example, “weak” notes that are fragile or require special fingerings that make them difficult to use in any rapid context. In very general terms, composers of the early periods took this into account in their compositions.

In Baroque recorders the bore tapers toward the bottom. This favors the higher notes, the use of which grew popular in the eighteenth century, but comes at the expense of the lower notes, which are weak. By contrast, Renaissance recorders have a wider bore that

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*“Recorders, as well as Baroque flutes and oboes, have a special set of considerations to keep in mind when writing for them. They have, for example, “weak” notes that are fragile or require special fingerings that make them difficult to use in any rapid context.”*

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flares outward toward the bottom, yielding very robust low notes, but limiting the upper range considerably. The music of the period naturally reflects this, with smaller ranges from high to low within any one voice.

Recorders also have a limited dynamic range. Using breath pressure to get louder or softer, as is done on modern wind instruments, merely distorts the pitch upward or downward. The use of idiomatic articulation techniques can add interest and shape to a melody. Modern recorder makers are creating new models that can tackle contemporary music and even stand up against the louder sounds of a symphony orchestra.

The absence of keywork on most recorders requires fingerings that skip some holes and cover others, a technique called *cross fingering*. Cross fingerings make music in some keys common in today's musical literature, often having four or five sharps or flats, very difficult to play on the recorder.

After languishing in the nineteenth century, recorders were rediscovered in the mid-twentieth century by visionary pioneers such as Frans Brüggen and Arnold Dolmetsch. The popularity of the instrument has enjoyed a resurgence since then with a worldwide community of enthusiasts. One form of recorder ensemble very popular in Europe and in some areas of the United States is the *recorder orchestra*. Recorder orchestras feature a large number of players using sizes of recorder from the tiny six-inch garklein to the nine-foot tall subcontrabass. The Los Angeles Recorder Orchestra has performed several of my pieces. It has also commissioned two larger works: the first, "Stolen Glimpses," in 2015 in honor of their founder Lia Starer Levin; and the second, currently in development, celebrating the ethnic neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

The Southern California Early Music News *has published several articles about the Los Angeles Recorder Orchestra (LARO). The most recent is "Wenn Engel Musizieren: When Angels Make Music" in the January 2019 edition.—Ed.*

## GLEN SHANNON BIOGRAPHY



Glen Shannon (b. 1966) is a composer and recorder player living near San Francisco, California. He is a member of the East Bay (CA) Recorder Society and Barbary Coast Recorder Orchestra. His love of

straightforward, approachable music for the recorder has garnered him several prizes in composition contests since 1997, including the Chicago Recorder Society and the

Washington (D.C.) Recorder Society. He publishes his music under his own name at [www.glenshannonmusic.com](http://www.glenshannonmusic.com), and has also had works published by Moeck Verlag, PRB Productions, Loux Music Publishing Company, *The Recorder Magazine* in the U.K., "Blokfluitist" in the Netherlands, and the American Recorder Society. Performances of some of his works can be found on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/glenshannon](http://www.youtube.com/glenshannon).

Portions of this article originally appeared in the September 2001 issue of *American Recorder* (ISSN: 0003-0724), the members' magazine of the American Recorder Society.



# CONCERT CALENDAR

**SATURDAY APRIL 13 7:30 PM**

**USC Collegium Workshop:**

**Engin subtil: Subtle Songs of Early-Modern France**

Adam Gilbert directs the USC Collegium Workshop in a concert of music from the great French 15th-century chansonniers, including newly discovered songs from the Leuven Chansonnier.

Free and open to the public. Seating is first-come, first-served, and RSVPs are not available.

USC Joyce J. Camilleri Hall  
Brain and Creativity Institute (BCI)  
3620 McClintock Ave., Los Angeles  
(Enter campus via the Downey Way or McClintock Ave. entrance and park at the Downey Way parking structure).

Info: <https://music.usc.edu/events/details/?event-id=1510419>

**SATURDAY, APRIL 13,**

**12 NOON LECTURE,**

**12:30 PERFORMANCE**

**LA Camerata: Frà Dori, e Fileno—A lecture recital**

LA Camerata performs the secular cantata by Camilla de Rossi (1710). Outside her surviving compositions, which include several oratorios in addition to Frà Dori, e Fileno (1710), all we know about Camilla de Rossi is that she called herself “The Roman.” The cantata is full of pastoral imagery in both text and sound. The ensemble will also demonstrate period gesture in lecture and staged performance. Featuring: Marisa De Silva (soprano), Sarah Reynolds (mezzo-soprano), Hunter Harris (violin), Ashley Salinas (violin), Marylin Winkle (cello), and Arthur Omura (harpsichord and organ). FREE

USC Brain & Creativity Institute

Camilleri Hall, 3620A McClintock Ave. Los Angeles, CA

Parking: Paid USC lot parking available in the Downey structure. Metered street and neighborhood street parking also available.

More info: <https://www.losangelescamerata.org/seasonevents/>

**SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 3 PM**

**Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra: J.S. Bach—St. Matthew Passion**

The St Matthew Passion (German: Matthäus-Passion), BWV 244, is widely regarded as one of the masterpieces of baroque music. Written in 1727 by Bach for performances in his Leipzig St. Thomas Church it is scored for two groups of vocalists and double orchestra. It sets parts of the Gospel of Matthew to music, told by the Evangelist (Tenor) in Dialogue with Jesus (Baritone and with interspersed chorales and arias. Year by year the St. Matthew Passion is performed in major cathedrals and concert halls over the world, in the world famous Concertgebouw in Amsterdam for instance, the passion is performed at least ten times in the two lenten weeks before Easter to sold out audiences.

With a cast of wonderful American and European Vocal soloists, Musica Angelica will perform this perennial masterwork in one of the most beautiful Los Angeles Churches to create atmosphere and spirit for a musical experience not to forget. Tickets: \$20 to \$59 (\*The special event is not included in the season subscription

First Congregational Church of Los Angeles  
540 S. Commonwealth Ave. LA, CA

More info <https://www.musicaangelica.org/>

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 6 PM**  
**Claremont Graduate University**  
**Faculty Concert: Bach and Rameau**

Jenny-Soonjin Kim and Robert Zappulla  
(harpsichords) Works By: J.S. Bach, Rameau.  
Free

Kresge Chapel, Claremont School of Theology,  
1325 N. College Ave., Claremon.

For further information please call 909-607-3509  
or email [deja.darrington@cgu.edu](mailto:deja.darrington@cgu.edu).

**FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 7:30 PM**  
**(repeats Sunday, April 28, 2:30 pm**  
**in West LA)**

**Los Angeles Baroque Players:**  
**Scarlatti, Janitch, Dornel and others**

Performing in Southern California since 1983,  
the Los Angeles Baroque Players, a period  
instrument ensemble, play a program including  
a harpsichord sonata by Scarlatti and music by  
Janitch, Dornel and other composers from the  
baroque era.

Anthony Brazier & Asuncion Ojeda, baroque  
flutes, Paul Sherman, baroque oboe, Adriana  
Zoppo, baroque violin & viola, Alexa Haynes-  
Pilon, baroque cello, Jeffrey Lavner, harpsichord

Ticket at the door. Prices: General \$30./ Seniors,  
SCEMS, SCRS,VdgS members \$20. Students 16 &  
over with ID \$10./ children 15 & under \$5.

Kreider Hall at Glendale Community College  
1500 North Verdugo Road Glendale, California  
91208 Free Parking on Circle Dr.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 8 PM**  
**USC Baroque Sinfonia—When Jubal**  
**Struck the Corded Shell:**

**Music about the Power of Music**

A concert featuring masterworks of the English  
and German High Baroque in praise of music,  
with vocal and instrumental drama and comedy  
by Purcell, Handel, Telemann, and Bach. FREE

Newman Recital Hall (AHF), USC

More info: [music.usc.edu](http://music.usc.edu)

**SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2:30 PM**  
**(repeats Fri April 26, 7:30pm**  
**in Glendale)**

**Los Angeles Baroque Players:**  
**Scarlatti, Janitch, Dornel and others**

(See April 26 listing for concert info)

Contrapuntal Performances Recital Hall  
655 N. Bundy Dr., Los Angeles

**CALENDAR ONLINE**

The Early Music Around Town  
online calendar features the very latest  
listings with updates and additions at  
<http://www.earlymusicla.org>. Report listing  
corrections and any errors to the Calendar  
Editor at [calendar@earlymusicla.org](mailto:calendar@earlymusicla.org).

**SUBMIT LISTINGS**

Free for all early music events!

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SCEMS calendar at [calendar@earlymusicla.org](mailto:calendar@earlymusicla.org).  
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performances: Con Gioia • Jouyssance • LA  
Master Chorale • LA Opera • Los Angeles  
Baroque Players • Musica Angelica •  
Tesseræ

For additional information on special pricing  
for selected performances, please consult the  
SCEMS calendar or contact SCEMS at [info@earlymusicla.org](mailto:info@earlymusicla.org)  
or [www.earlymusicla.org](http://www.earlymusicla.org).

**SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 3:30 PM**  
**Fullerton Friends of Music presents**  
**the Diderot String Quartet**

Diderot String Quartet—named after the eighteenth-century French philosopher and Boccherini enthusiast Denis Diderot—brings a fresh approach to works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Diderot came together in 2012 after having first met at Oberlin Conservatory and The Juilliard School. The four musicians share a background in historical performance and a passion for the string quartet genre, finding the thrill of exploring the quartet repertoire on period instruments to be irresistible. Their concert in Fullerton will feature works by Beethoven and Haydn. The concert is free; donations are gratefully accepted.

Wilshire Auditorium, on Lemon between Wilshire and Chapman, Fullerton, CA.

For more information, please visit [www.fullertonfriendsofmusic.com](http://www.fullertonfriendsofmusic.com), or call 562-691-7437.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 4 PM**  
**L'Esprit Baroque: Hall of Mirrors**  
**of the Sun King.**

Join us to welcome the season with a taste of Joseph Bodin de Boismortier's cantata *Printemps* and bring you to the Hall of Mirrors of the Sun King! *L'Isle de Délos* by Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre depicts the Isle of Delos in Greek mythology, where Apollo rules over his daughters, the nine Muses. This cantata was composed for arts patron extraordinaire King Louis XIV of France, who often represented himself as "the Sun King" or Apollo. Also featured on this program will be works by Marais, Rebel, Hotteterre, and more.

Suggested donation: \$20, \$10–15 SCEMS/seniors/low-income. None turned away for lack of funds.

Blessed Sacrament Episcopal Church, 1314 N Angelina Drive, Placentia.

For information and advance tickets visit <http://lespritbaroque.com> or email [lespritbaroque@gmail.com](mailto:lespritbaroque@gmail.com)

## **PUBLICATION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

For complete submission information, consult: [www.earlymusicla.org](http://www.earlymusicla.org). All items should be received by the appropriate editor by the 1st of the month, one month prior to the issue month. Issues are monthly, September through June, subject to change. Calendar listings are free, but restricted to early music relevant events. For information on advertising (reservation deadlines, pricing and requirements), please call 310-358-5967 or email [ads@earlymusicla.org](mailto:ads@earlymusicla.org). Please do **not** mail any submissions to the SCEMS P.O. Box.

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*Southern California*  
*Early Music*  
NEWS

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## THINGS TO COME

**EMAT Calendar** [www.earlymusicla.org/calendar](http://www.earlymusicla.org/calendar), a monthly shortlist of local early music concerts and events.

### Current Master Calendar

[www.earlymusicla.org/2017-2018-calendar](http://www.earlymusicla.org/2017-2018-calendar), a list of the entire season of concerts and events.

### The Boston Early Music

**Festival** has announced its 2018–2019 season. For more information, please go to [www.bemf.org](http://www.bemf.org).

### The San Francisco Early

**Music Society** has announced its 2018–2019 Concert Season: Voices Shaping Time. For more information, please go to [http://sfems.org/?page\\_id=13416](http://sfems.org/?page_id=13416).

### The San Francisco Early

**Music Society** has announced that registration is open for its 2019 Summer Workshop. Early Bird Discounts are available until March 31st. For more information, please go to <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?class=sfems>.