



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**ASTON MAGNA FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES NEW LEADERSHIP**

The Aston Magna Foundation for Music and the Humanities is pleased to announce the election of a new Board Chair, Catherine Liddell, and the appointment of a new Executive Director, Susan B. Obel. Ms. Liddell succeeds Aston Magna's Chairman of 28 years, Robert B. Strassler.

Aston Magna Festival is the nation's longest-running festival for early music performed on period instruments. The upcoming Festival will take place Thursdays through Saturdays from June 13 through July 13, with concerts Thursday nights at Brandeis University's Slosberg Auditorium; Friday nights at Olin Hall, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; and Saturday nights at Daniel Arts Center at Bard College at Simon's Rock, in Great Barrington, MA. There will be a special June 29 concert at the historic Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington.

Catherine Liddell is in high demand for her skill, sensitivity and experience as a continuo player on theorbo and lute. In her more than 35 years as a professional player, she has performed with many of America's leading period instrument ensembles, including Boston Baroque, the Handel & Haydn Society, Apollo's Fire (Cleveland), the New York Collegium, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, St. Luke's Chamber Orchestra, and in the Aston Magna and the Boston Early Music Festivals. She has recorded for Musical Heritage Society, Titanic, Dorian, Wildboar and Centaur Records.

"I was honored to be invited to be on the Board of Directors and humbly step up to this leadership position as Chair. Susan and I are a good fit, so with her experience and my own passion, the support of the Board, and the creativity of our Music Director Daniel Stepner, Aston Magna has more great years ahead of it!"

A graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, Ms. Liddell earned the Soloist Diploma from the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Basel, Switzerland. She is Past-President of the Lute Society of America and Lecturer in Lute in the Historical Performance Program at Boston University.

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Susan Obel, of New York City and South Egremont, MA, succeeds Aston Magna's long-time Director, Ronnie Boriskin, who has taken a position as Director of Foundation Relations with the Manhattan School of Music in New York City.

"I am excited to be part of the Aston Magna organization as it begins its fifth decade, coming off a highly successful 40th anniversary season," says Obel, "and I am particularly delighted to be working with Cathy." A life-long music lover, and presently a singer with Collegiate Chorale in New York City, Obel had her first job in Arts Management with St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble/Orchestra of St. Luke's. "I got my feet wet as a part-time Office Manager, but as a member of a small staff I soon became involved in writing, fundraising and special events." Following St. Luke's she joined the staff of the Harlem School of the Arts, working closely with then Executive Director Betty Allen. There she launched and co-produced an annual Radiothon with radio legend Robert Sherman and WQXR, a fundraising event that continued for many years. Following that was a 15-year stint in PR and Fundraising with Theatreworks/USA, the nation's preeminent professional theatre for young and family audiences.

Aston Magna was founded in 1972 by Albert Fuller and Lee Elman. Among the many highlights of Aston Magna's pioneering history have been the first performances of the complete Bach Brandenburg Concertos and the first Mozart symphonies heard in America on original instruments. The 2013 Festival will feature unusual and exciting programs including The Art of the Chalumeau (early clarinet), madrigals by Monteverdi and de Wert, and Music from the Library of Thomas Jefferson - himself an accomplished musician who traveled widely collecting works by Corelli, JC Bach, Mozart, and others who will be featured on the program. Also offered this season are a concert of Bach and Marin Marais, with soprano Dominique Labelle, and chamber orchestra; and the complete violin sonatas of JS Bach performed by violinist and Aston Magna Artistic Director, Daniel Stepner, and harpsichordist Peter Sykes.