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## It's All Greek

By ALAN RICH

The Getty has put together a series of musical events with its own highfalutin title: Ancient Echoes: Music and Dance Evoking Greco-Roman Antiquity.

The first program put forward a generous gathering of vocal works of Florence and Venice from around 1600, music stunning in its emotional intensity, directly influenced by the proclamations of the Camerata that had called for a new manner of composition in which melody and harmony were to join to underscore the passions of the text. Under Michael Eagan's splendid direction, with vintage-instrument performers from his Musica Angelica ensemble, a splendid vocal quartet delivered a survey of early Baroque heartbreak, songs short and long resounding with "lamento," "soffrire," "misero" relieved by an occasional palliative "dolcissimi." It's a wonderful repertory; the geniuses of the age - Claudio Monteverdi above all, but also his colleagues Francesco Cavalli and, you'll be happy to hear, Barbara Strozzi - were marvelously adept at the sudden key change, the stinging dissonance, the jagged leap in the vocal line, all in the ardent quest for putting over the deepest sentiments with the most economical means. The singers - the well-known Judith Nelson along with Jennifer Lane, Daniel Plaster and the prodigiously resonant bass Curtis Streetman - had obviously been urged by Eagan to avoid the prissy delivery that lesser souls associate with early music, and to sing out. The results were astonishing.