

WIGMORE HALL

Wednesday 10 April 2024
7.30pm

The English Concert

Harry Bicket director, harpsichord

Iestyn Davies countertenor

Nadja Zwiener leader, violin I

Kinga Ujszászi violin I

Annie Gard violin I

Guy Button violin I

Davina Clarke violin II

Elizabeth MacCarthy violin II

Rodrigo Checa Lorite violin II

Mark Seow violin II

Jordan Bowron viola

Charlotte Fairbairn viola

Joseph Crouch cello

Jonathan Byers cello

Alexander Jones double bass

Sergio Bucheli theorbo

Tom Foster harpsichord, organ

Rachel Brown flute recorder

Clara Espinosa Encinas oboe

Olwen Foulkes recorder

Catriona McDermid bassoon

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

From *Radamisto* HWV12 (1720)

Passacaille • Ombra cara di mia sposa

Concerto grosso in A Op. 6 No. 11 HWV329 (1739)

*I. Andante larghetto e staccato • II. Allegro •
III. Largo e staccato - Andante • IV. Allegro*

Splenda l'alba HWV166 (c.1710-12)

Interval

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Overture from *L'Olimpiade* RV725 (1734)

Sol da te mio dolce amore from *Orlando Furioso* RV728 (1727)

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)

Concerto grosso in D Op. 6 No. 4 (pub. 1714)

*I. Adagio - Allegro • II. Adagio • III. Vivace •
IV. Allegro*

Antonio Vivaldi

Cessate, omai cessate RV684

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In 1713 the German critic and theorist Johann Mattheson wrote in his book *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre* that 'in these times, whoever wishes to be eminent in music goes to England. In Italy and France there is something to be heard and learned; in England, there is something to be earned'. Lucky for **Handel**, then, that he had spent so many of his wayfaring years in Italy when he found himself desperately strapped for cash and looking to create some new opportunities for himself after the main source of his income, the Royal Academy of Music, went bankrupt. Looking for something to entice his subscribers to stay with him for the 1739 season, he and his close collaborator John Walsh advertised his new 'Opus 6' – a collection of *concerti grossi* showcasing the instrumental techniques he had studied in Italy, and capitalising on the reputation of the famous Op. 6 of his older Italian contemporary Arcangelo Corelli.

To leverage himself out of this tricky situation Handel had leased the Theatre at Lincoln's Inn Fields and prepared to appeal to the 'Englishness' of his audiences by mounting two of his most English works – the *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* and *Alexander's Feast* – alongside the contrasting *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*. These non-liturgical sacred vocal pieces not only plugged the gap left by his departure from the King's opera house, but also encouraged him to finish the multi-purpose Opus 6. At least ten of its twelve concerti appeared over the course of Handel's first two seasons at Lincoln's Inn, interpolated with the new season's works as overtures and intermezzos, and providing a direct link back to his more carefree years in Rome.

When in Rome, Handel had done as the Romans and carefully studied the *concerto grosso*. What he had learned from them there, and earned from them

later in England, was that its instrumentation – two groups of instruments in the form of a small concertino of virtuoso instruments and a larger, supporting *ripieno* – was eminently transferrable, and hospitable to a variety of forms. The first two movements of his Concerto Grosso Op. 6 No. 11, for instance, appear in the manner of a French overture that would work well in free-standing instrumental music or as part of a larger vocal work such as those Handel was putting on at Lincoln's Inn. The final movements, however, are more redolent of the recitative and expansive da capo aria of an Italian opera.

Although the concerto grosso probably originated as a solution to the problems of balance when groups of instruments accompanied a solo voice, **Corelli's** arrival in Rome signified that the time had come for the form to be reserved for purely instrumental music. In the centuries since his *concerti grossi* were first published, the importance of their innovation has loomed large enough to make it hard to imagine what his influences could possibly have been. There are many possibilities, but they all crystallise in the works of Stradella with which Handel was so familiar. The young Corelli was definitely performing in concerts of these works shortly after he arrived in Rome, and everything he wrote into these new forms can be heard in the Op. 6 No. 4 – from the fleeting introduction to the *Allegro* and its supporting interjections from the *ripieno*, through a moving slow movement to a textbook dance movement, to a contrastingly dramatic conclusion.

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Please note that tonight's programme has changed since these notes were written.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

From *Radamisto* HWV12 (1720)

Nicola Francesco Haym, after Domenico Lalli and Matteo Norris

Passacaille

Ombra cara di mia sposa

Ombra cara di mia sposa,

Deh! Riposa

E lieta aspetta

La vendetta che farò!

E poi tosto, ove tu stai

Mi vedrai

Venir a volo

E fedel t'abbraccerò.

Beloved shade of my wife

Beloved shade of my wife,

ah! rest now

and, freed from care, await

the vengeance I shall wreak.

And soon, where you are, you will see me

fly to join you and hold you

in a faithful embrace.

Concerto grosso in A Op. 6 No. 11 HWV329 (1739)

I. Andante larghetto e staccato

II. Allegro

III. Largo e staccato - Andante

IV. Allegro

Splenda l'alba HWV166 As the dawn shines

(c.1710-12)

Anonymous

Aria

Splenda l'alba in oriente,

Cada il sole in occidente,

Virtù sempre esalterò.

Sia la lingua più canora,

Sia la cetra più sonora,

Oltre il ciel, oltre le stelle,

Le sue belle

Aria

As the dawn shines in the east,

as the sun sinks in the west,

I will always glorify Virtue.

Let my voice be more melodious,

let my zither be more sonorous;

beyond heaven, beyond the stars

her beautiful,

Alte glorie innalzerò.

lofty glories I will exalt.

Recitativo

Tu, armonica Cecilia,

Che rapisti col canto,

Che incantasti col suono,

Fa pur che sia concesso

A questo stuol de' tuoi seguaci egregi

D'imitare i tuoi pregi,

Perchè un nobil natale

Si rende oscuro senza Virtute uguale.

Recitative

You, harmonious Cecilia, who ravished with your singing,

who enchanted with your playing,

let it then be granted

to this crowd of your esteemed followers

to imitate your talents, for a noble birth

is rendered obscure without Virtue to match.

Aria

La Virtute è un vero nume

Del mortal nel basso mondo.

Chi si scosta dal suo lume

Va nell'ombre del profondo.

Aria

Virtue is a true deity among mortals in this lowly world.

He who turns from her light

wanders in the deepest darkness.

Interval

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Overture from *L'Olimpiade* RV725 (1734)

Sol da te mio dolce amore from *Orlando*

Furioso RV728 (1727)

Sol da te mio dolce amore

Only from you, my sweet love

Sol da te, mio dolce amore,

Questo core

Avrà pace avrà conforto.

Only from you, my sweet love,

will this heart

have peace and solace.

Le tue vaghe luci belle

Son le stelle,

Onde amor mi guida in porto.

Your beautiful eyes full of longing

are the stars

that let love guide me into port.

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)

Concerto grosso in D Op. 6 No. 4 (pub. 1714)

I. Adagio - Allegro

II. Adagio

III. Vivace

IV. Allegro

Antonio Vivaldi

Cessate, omai cessate Cease, now cease RV684

Anonymous

Recitativo accompagnato

Cessate, omai cessate,
Rimembranze crudeli d'un
affetto tiranno;
Già barbare e spietate
Mi cangiaste i contenti in un
immenso affanno.

Cessate, omai cessate,
Di lacerarmi il petto,
Di trafiggermi l'alma,
Di toglier al mio cor riposo, e
calma.
Povero core afflitto e
abbandonato,
Se ti toglie la pace un affetto
tiranno,
Perché un volto spietato, un
alma infida
La sola crudeltà pasce ed
annida.

Aria

Ah, ah ch'infelice
sempre
Me vuol Dorilla ingrata,
Ah sempre piu spietata;
M'astringe à lagrimar.
Per me non v'è no,
Non v'è ristoro
Per me non v'è no,
Non v'è più
speme.
E il fier martoro e le mie
pene,
Solo la morte può consolar.

Recitativo accompagnato

Cease, now cease,
cruel memories of a
ruthless love;
brutal and callous,
you have turned my joy
into immense sorrow.

Cease, now cease
wounding my breast,
piercing my soul,
divesting my heart of rest
and calm.
Poor heart, afflicted and
forsaken,
a ruthless love divests
you of calm,
because an unkind face, a
treacherous soul
nurtures and harbours
cruelty alone.

Aria

Ah, cruel Dorilla wants me
to be unhappy for ever;
ah, ever more heartless
she drives me to tears.
For me there is,
no, there is no escape,
for me there is,
no, there is no more hope.
And only death can
ease
my suffering and woes.

Recitativo accompagnato

A voi dunque, ricorro orridi
specchi,
Taciturni orrori,
solitari ritiri,
Ed ombre amichi trà voi
porto il mio duolo,
Perche spero da voi quella
pietade,
Che Dorilla inhumana non
annida.
Vengo, spelonche amate,
vengo specchi graditi,
Affine meco involto il mio
tormento in voi
Resti
sepolto.

Aria

Nell'orrido albergo ricetto di
pene
Potrò il mio tormento
sfogare contento,
Potrò ad alta voce chiamare
spietata
Dorilla l'ingrata, morire potrò.
Andrò d'Acheronte sù le nera
sponda,
Tinguendo quest'onda di
sangue innocente,
Gridando vendetta,
Ed ombra baccante
vendetta
farò.

Recitativo accompagnato

To you, then, I turn,
fearful waters,
silent horrors, solitary
places;
friendly shadows, I bring
my grief to you,
for I hope you will offer
me the pity
that is beyond cruel
Dorilla.
I come, beloved caves, I
come, inviting waters,
so that the torment
I bear
may lie buried deep
within you.

Aria

In this dark place, a
refuge from pain,
I can freely express my
torment,
I can say out loud that
Dorinda
is cruel and thankless, I
can die.
I shall go to the dark
banks of the Acheron,
staining its waters with
innocent blood,
calling out for vengeance,
and as a wrathful spirit I
shall have that
vengeance.

*Translation of 'Ombra cara di mia sposa' © Susannah Howe/Erato
Warner Classics. 'Cessate, omai cessate' by Susannah Howe.*