

# WIGMORE HALL

Monday 11 September 2023  
7.30pm

## Celebrating Women Baroque Composers

Roberta Invernizzi soprano  
Franco Pavan theorbo  
Gabriele Palomba theorbo  
Flora Papadopoulou harp  
Mauro Lopes Ferreira violin  
Rossella Croce violin  
Alberto Guerrero cello

Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677)	From <i>Diporti di Euterpe</i> Op. 7 (pub. 1659) Lagrimie mie • Tradimento
Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)	Sonata a tre Op. 16 No. 5 (pub. 1683)
Settimia Caccini (c.1591-1660)	Due luci ridenti Si miei tormenti
Isabella Leonarda	Sonata a più strumenti Op. 16 No. 7 (pub. 1683)
Barbara Strozzi	Sino alla morte from <i>Diporti di Euterpe</i> Op. 7
Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729)	Passacaille from <i>Céphale et Procris</i> (1694)
Barbara Strozzi	Mi fa rider la Speranza from <i>Diporti di Euterpe</i> Op. 7 Hor che Apollo (pub. 1664)

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This celebration of music from the Baroque era begins and ends with remarkable late works from the Venetian composer **Barbara Strozzi**. Our fascination with the lives of women composers can distract from their creative achievements and this has been particularly true for Strozzi, with speculation as to whether she was a courtesan obscuring her compositional development over a long creative life. Strozzi began her career in the 1640s, composing small-scale pieces designed to showcase and complement her career as a singer. Indeed, all tonight's programmed composers were composer-performers, a standard combination of roles for the period. By the time Strozzi wrote the works you will hear tonight, taken from her Op. 7 (1659) and Op. 8 (1664), her music, always dramatic, had grown in ambition, innovation and scale. In 'Lagrimie mie' she evokes raw emotion, asking her singer to let rip with an astonishingly doleful wail, from the very top of the vocal register, falling down and down, over a stationary harmony. The intensity is merely heightened by the faltering syncopated rhythm and some glorious dissonances. As one musicologist has written, this kind of thing had been done before, but never in such an extreme way. Tonight's programme ends, fittingly, with a farewell - 'Hor che Apollo', a song which challenges the listener to consider Strozzi's own complex status as performer, composer and woman, whilst playfully speaking with the voice of a man.

We know Strozzi's music today primarily because she committed to publishing her work, preparing her manuscripts with a rare, for her time, number of performance indications - nuances of dynamics, tempi and ornaments all carefully explicated. Strozzi cared about how her work would survive, and wanted to ensure that it would. In Venice, and without a conventional sexual reputation to protect, she could not only perform and compose, but publish and be damned. What she could not do was write for public opera, the exciting new art form emerging in her home city precisely during her lifetime, and one perfectly suited to her flair for the dramatic.

Opera remained a challenging, if not forbidden, arena for women composers for generations to come. **Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre's** *Passacaille* (music for a dance interlude) comes from *Céphale et Procris*, her 1694 opera or *tragédie en musique*, as it was called at the time. The *Passacaille* displays Jacquet de la Guerre's signature elegance and balance, but also her intriguing blend of lightness and melancholy. Its composer was not yet 30, but already a veteran and highly successful performer and composer, a favourite of King Louis XIV, celebrated in the opera's prologue. *Céphale et Procris* was 'the talk of Paris', but it did not do well. Was it the weak libretto or the French public's nostalgia for Lully, or was it simply the presence of a female composer in the halls of the Académie Royale? Sadly for us, the poor reception of *Céphale et Procris* stopped Jacquet de la Guerre in her opera tracks. She

did go on to compose cantatas, increasingly recognised, but she is now best known for her trio sonatas, a genre in which she led the way in France.

Over the Alps in Italy, another woman was making her own important contribution to this exciting new form. **Isabella Leonarda's** trio sonatas appeared in 1693, the earliest known trio sonatas to be published by a woman. She dedicated them to the Virgin Mary, writing that 'if these pieces do not please the World, I shall be content if You like them, because You appreciate the heart above the intellect'. The dedication is a reminder that, from the age of 16, Leonarda lived and worked in the convent of St Ursula in Novara where, amongst other roles, she was *magistra musicae* (music teacher). The Ursuline community offered a rich musical environment, demanding a steady stream of new compositions. That Leonarda wrote (secular) trio sonatas alongside sacred music should not come as a surprise given the permeability between convents and the outside world. As Laurie Stras writes, convent music was 'colourful, varied, witty, and sophisticated, continually resonating with practices and references from the secular culture the nuns had officially forsworn'. Working at the cutting edge of new music, both of tonight's sonatas show Leonarda exploring the potential for dialogue between instruments, whilst in the Sonata a più strumenti Op. 16 No. 7, a 'concerted sonata', each instrument is given at least one solo passage. Corelli's trio sonatas would become the template for the genre, but here is Leonarda experimenting with it in its earliest years, and admired in her own time for being 'so charming, so brilliant', 'so knowledgeable and so wise'.

Leonarda's two sonatas frame songs by the Florentine **Settimia Caccini**, a composer overshadowed by not one, but two family members. Her father, singer and composer Giulio, was the renowned author of the ground-breaking *Le nuove musiche* (1602). Her sister, Francesca, was the highest paid musician at the Medici court and the first woman to compose an opera. We know that Settimia worked at the Gonzaga court at the same time as Monteverdi; it is likely she had the same training and education, and certainly the same performance opportunities, as her sister. But apart from a passing reference to her 'superhuman grace and an angelic voice', Settimia remains hidden. Yet her compositions show her to be Giulio's daughter and Francesca's sister in their energy, word-setting ('speak in music' urged Giulio in *Le nuove musiche*), and the way she sets exciting challenges for her singer.

Sophisticated, dramatic, innovative: this programme demonstrates, if there was any doubt, that women were engaged from the start in the most significant musical developments of the 17th Century. The Baroque is quite simply not the same without their voices.

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## Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677)

### From *Diporti di Euterpe Op. 7* (pub. 1659)

#### Lagrimie mie

*Pietro Dolfino*

Lagrimie mie, à che vi  
trattenete?  
Perché non isfogate il fier  
dolore  
Che mi toglie'l respiro e  
opprime il core?  
Lidia, che  
tant'adoro,  
Perch'un guardo pietoso, ah,  
mi donò,  
Il paterno rigor  
l'imprigionò.  
Tra due mura rinchiusa  
Sta la bella  
innocente,  
Dove giunger non può raggio  
di sole;  
E quel che più mi duole  
Ed' accresc'al mio mal  
tormenti e pene,  
È che per mia cagione  
Provi male il mio bene.  
E voi, lumi dolenti, non  
piangete?  
Lagrimie mie, à che vi  
trattenete?  
Lidia, ahimè, veggio mancarmi  
L'idol mio che tanto  
adoro;  
Sta colei tra duri  
marmi,  
Per cui spiro e pur non  
moro.  
Se la morte m'è gradita,  
Hor che son privo di  
spene,  
Deh, toglietemi la vita,  
Ve ne prego, aspre mie pene.  
  
Ma ben m'accorgo che per  
tormentarmi  
Maggiormente la sorte  
Mi niega anco la morte.  
Se dunque è vero, o Dio,  
Che sol del pianto mio  
Il rio destino ha sete,  
Lagrimie mie, à che vi  
trattenete?

#### My tears

My tears, why do you hold  
back?  
Why do you not let burst  
forth the fierce pain  
that takes my breath and  
oppresses my heart?  
Because she looked on me  
with a favourable glance,  
Lidia, whom I so much  
adore,  
is imprisoned by her  
stern father.  
Between two walls  
the beautiful innocent  
one is enclosed,  
where the sun's rays can't  
reach her;  
and what grieves me most  
and adds torment and  
pain to my suffering,  
is that my love  
suffers on my account.  
And you, grieving eyes,  
you don't weep?  
My tears, why do you hold  
back?  
Alas, I miss Lidia,  
the idol that I so much  
adore;  
she's enclosed in hard  
marble,  
the one for whom I sigh  
and yet do not die.  
Because I welcome death,  
now that I'm deprived of  
hope,  
Ah, take away my life,  
I implore you, my harsh  
pain.  
But I well realise that to  
torment me  
all the more  
fate denies me even death.  
Thus since it's true, oh God,  
that wicked destiny  
thirsts only for my weeping,  
tears, why do you hold  
back?

## Tradimento

*Giorgio Tani*

Tradimento, tradimento!  
Amore e la speranza  
Voglion farmi prigioniero,  
E a tal segno il mal  
s'avanza,  
Ch'ho scoperto ch'il  
pensiero  
Dice d'esserne contento.  
Tradimento, tradimento!  
La speranza per legarmi,  
A gran cose mi  
lusinga,  
S'io le credo avvien che  
stringa  
Lacci sol da  
incatenarmi.  
Mio core all'armi,  
S'incontri  
l'infida,  
Si prenda, s'uccida,  
Su presto, su presto!  
E periglioso ogni  
momento.  
Tradimento, tradimento!

## Betrayal

Betrayal! Treason!  
Love and Hope  
want to make me a prisoner  
and my sickness is so  
advanced  
that I have discovered  
that I am happy  
just thinking of it.  
Betrayal!  
Hope, in order to bind me,  
entices me with great  
things.  
The more I believe what  
she says  
the tighter she ties the  
laces that enchain me.  
My heart, take arms  
against the treacherous  
one!  
Take her and kill her,  
hurry, hurry!  
Every moment is  
dangerous.  
Betrayal!

## Isabella Leonarda (1620-1704)

### Sonata a tre Op. 16 No. 5 (pub. 1683)

## Settimia Caccini (c.1591-1660)

### Due luci ridenti

*Anonymous*

Due luci ridenti con guardo  
sereno  
Di dolci tormenti  
m'ingombrano il seno.  
Ma lampi d'Amore rapiscono  
il core  
Con furto gentile la  
libertà.  
Pur lieto vivrà quest'alma  
cantando,  
T'adora penando celeste  
beltà.

Due labbra di Rose con dolci  
rossori  
Le paci amorse promettono  
ai cori.  
Ma in quel bel sereno  
s'annida il veleno  
Che uccide dell'alme la  
libertà.  
Pur lieto vivrà ...

Due braccia soavi, mie dolci  
catene,  
Far posson men gravi  
l'acerbe mie pene.  
Da quest'io desio sia servo il  
cor mio,  
Si perda, si perda la  
libertà.  
Pur lieto vivrà...

Due risi, due sguardi, due  
care parole,  
Sian fiamme, sian  
dardi, morir non mi  
duole.  
Morrommi beato, morrò  
fortunato  
E perderò lieto la  
libertà.  
Pur lieto vivrà...

### Si miei tormenti

*Anonymous*

Si miei  
tormenti  
Con dolci accenti  
Tempra la vaga e vezzosetta  
Clori,  
Altro non chiamo,  
Altro non bramo

### Two laughing eyes

Two laughing eyes,  
serenely gazing,  
flood my breast with  
sweet anguish.  
And in courteous style  
Love's lightning bolts  
do deprive my heart of its  
freedom.  
Yet this soul will live  
joyfully, and sing,  
if by suffering it can worship  
you, divine beauty.

Two rosy lips, softly  
blushing,  
promise hearts times of  
love and peace.  
But in that fair serenity  
lurks the poison  
that will destroy a spirit's  
freedom.  
Yet this soul, ...

Two gentle arms, my  
welcome chains,  
can ease the pain of my  
bitter torment.  
But I wish my heart to be  
enslaved  
and abandon all hope of  
freedom.  
Yet this soul, ...

Two smiles, two glances,  
two kind words –  
let them be flames or  
arrows, I feel no pain on  
dying.  
I shall die happy, I shall  
die blessed,  
gladly relinquishing my  
freedom.  
Yet this soul, ...

### If she will ease my suffering

If Chloris so fair and  
charming  
will ease my suffering  
with her sweet  
words,  
nothing else shall I ask for,  
nothing else shall I long for,

Che dar conforto a'duri miei  
tormenti.

S'a'miei martiri  
Caldi sospiri  
Scioglie da quel che già fu  
duro core,  
Strali pungenti  
Amor m'avventi:  
Eterno il duolo, eterno sia  
l'ardore.

Voi, vaghi rai,  
Ch'a mesti  
lai  
Stille di pianto per pietà versate,  
Co'vostri  
sguardi  
D'acuti dardi  
Al crudo arciero la faretra  
armate.

Che se sospira,  
Ch'in me vi gira,  
Qualor vede ch'il cor trafitto  
langue,  
Lumi vezzosi,  
Lumi pietosi,  
Dolce mi fia versar l'anima e'l  
sanguè.

than that she soothe the  
torment I feel.

If from a once stony heart  
she will utter warm sighs  
at my  
misery,  
let Cupid attack me  
with his barbed arrows:  
let pain, let passion be  
everlasting.

You, lovely eyes,  
who are moved by sad  
songs  
to shed tears of pity,  
now fill the cruel archer's  
quiver  
with the keen darts  
of your  
glances.

Thus if she sighs,  
if she turns you toward me,  
and sees my pierced  
heart aching,  
beautiful eyes,  
merciful eyes,  
gladly shall I give up my  
soul and my blood.

## Isabella Leonarda

### Sonata a più strumenti Op. 16 No. 7 (pub. 1683)

## Barbara Strozzi

### Sino alla morte from *Diparti di Euterpe* Op. 7

*Sebastiano Baldini*

Sino alla morte  
Mi protesto d'adorarvi,  
Voglio amarvi  
A dispetto del tempo  
E della sorte,  
Sino alla morte  
L'inanellato crine,  
Che biondeggia superbo in  
masse d'oro,  
Per le man dell'età divenga  
argento;  
L'amorse rovine  
Della vostra beltà ch'io tanto  
adoro,  
Calpesti il tempo a  
consumarle intento.

### Until death

Until death,  
I vow that I will adore you.  
I want to love you  
in defiance of time  
and fate,  
until death.  
Let your adorned locks,  
magnificently resplendent in  
masses of gold,  
be turned to silver by the  
hand of age;  
Let the beloved ruins  
of your beauty that I so  
adore  
be trampled by time intent  
on consuming them.

Resti ogni lume spento	Let every light be spent
Delle pupille, e d'ostri e di cinabri	from your eyes and let the scarlet and vermilion
Veggansi impoverir le guance e i labri.	of your cheeks and lips become impoverished.
Pur del pensiero	Even against thought
Che nudre l'alma,	that nourishes the soul,
Havrà la palma	the blind archer
Il cieco Arciero.	will take the prize.
Al desio ch'a voi s'aggira,	The desire that surrounds you,
Che per voi sempre sospira,	that sighs for you continuously,
Goderò del mio core aprir le porte	will delight in opening the door of my heart
Sino alla morte.	until death parts us.
Turbi la fede mia	Let my trust be troubled
Il toscano de gl'amanti,	by the poison of lovers,
La ministra de' pianti,	that overseer of tears,
L'origin d'ogni mal: la gelosia.	the origin of every ill: jealousy.
Servirò la tiranna	I will serve the tyrant
Ch'a morir mi condanna,	that condemns me to death,
Tra cure ne' martir, fra le ritorte	amidst the cares of misfortune, amidst trials,
Sino alla morte.	until death.
Scuota la mia costanza	Let my faithfulness be troubled
La nemica d'amore,	by the enemy of love,
La madre del dolore,	the mother of suffering,
La furia d'ogni cor: la lontananza.	the frenzy of every heart: separation.
In adorar costei	In adoring her,
Con tutti i voti miei,	by all my vows,
Mi vedrà quale Anteo sorger più forte	I will be seen, like Antaeus, to rise stronger than before,
Sino alla morte.	until death.
Può la fortuna	Let fortune
Trarmi lontano,	carry me afar,
Ma sempre invano	yet always in vain
Gl'affanni aduna.	will it bring vexations.
Aque non serba il fiume dell'oblio,	The river of oblivion doesn't hold
Che bastino a temprar l'incendio mio,	enough water to quell my passion,
Poiché ad estinguer l'amoroso foco	for to extinguish the fire of my love would take
Ci vuol un mare, anzi ch'un mare è poco.	an ocean, and even an ocean is too little.
Io so ch'alle faville degl'amanti,	I know that all the oceans of the world are not
Tutti i mari alla fin non son bastanti.	equal to the sparks that fly between lovers.

Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729)

Passacaille from *Céphale et Procris* (1694)

Barbara Strozzi

Mi fa rider la Speranza      Hope makes me  
from *Diporti di Euterpe*      laugh

Op. 7

Gio. Pietro Monesi

Mi fa rider la speranza,	Hope makes me laugh,
Che per forza vuol ch'io spero,	wanting to force me to be hopeful,
E ch'io semini i pensieri	and for me to sow my thoughts
Nel terren dell'incostanza.	in the ground of inconstancy.
Sempre vol quest'importuna	That pest always wants
Ch'io contrasti col mio fato,	me to contend with fate,
E ch'io segua un cor intrato	and to pursue an intractable heart
Al dispetto di fortuna.	in despite of fortune.
Ma senza godere	But since I don't enjoy
Ch'io peni ogni dì,	suffering every day,
Non è di dovere,	it's not an obligation,
Non dico così;	it isn't, I say;
Non piace al mio core	Such barbarous treatment
Ch'è scaltr'amatore	doesn't suit my heart,
Si barbara usanza.	which is astute in love.
Mi fa rider la speranza...	Hope makes me laugh...
Favolosi precipitii	Phaeton's fall
Furon quelli di Fetonte,	was a myth,
E bugiardi in Flegetonte	and Tityos's sufferings
Son le pene ancor di Tizi.	in the Phlegethon are also fiction,
Io sì che nel pianto	but I really drown
Sommergomi ogn'hora,	perpetually in tears,
E sempre pur tanto	and my ardor
L'ardor mi divora,	devours me continuously,
Che provo un inferno	so that I'm in an inferno
Che dura in eterno,	that lasts for eternity
E sempre s'avanza.	and keeps getting worse.
Mi fa rider la speranza....	Hope makes me laugh...

## Hor che Apollo

(pub. 1664)

*Anonymous*

Hor che Apollo è a Teti in  
seno  
E il mio sol sta in grembo al  
sonno,  
Hor ch'a lui pensand'io  
peno,  
Né posar gl'occhi miei  
ponno,  
A questo albergo per sfogar  
il duolo  
Vengo piangente,  
innamorato e solo.

Sì, Filli, questo core  
Che per amor si more,  
A te vien supplicante  
De' tuoi bei lumi  
amante.

Mira al pie' tante  
catene,  
Lucidissima mia stella,  
E se duolti ch'io stia in  
pene  
Sii men cruda o pur men  
bella.

Se men cruda,  
pietade  
Havrò del mio servir, saprò  
che m'ami;  
E se men bella, io frangerò i  
legami.

Vedi al core quante spine  
Tu mi dai, vermiglia  
rosa,  
E se sdegni mie  
rovine,  
Sii men fiera o men  
vezzosa.

Ma isfogatevi,  
Sprigionatevi,  
Miei sospir, s'io già  
comprendo  
Che di me ride Filli anco  
dormendo.

## Now that Apollo

Now that Apollo rests on  
the breast of Thetis  
and my sun is in the arms  
of sleep,  
now that I'm suffering  
thinking of her  
and my eyes can find no  
rest,  
I come to this refuge to  
relieve my pain,  
in tears, in love, and  
alone.

Yes, Filli, this heart  
that is dying of love  
comes imploringly to you,  
in love with your beautiful  
eyes.

See all the chains holding  
me down,  
my luminous star,  
and if it grieves you to see  
me suffer,  
be less cruel or at least  
less beautiful.

If you're less cruel, you'll  
take pity  
on my servitude, and I'll  
know that you love me;  
if you were less beautiful, I  
could break my chains.

Red rose, look at how  
you pierce my heart with  
many thorns,  
and if you're indifferent to  
my distress,  
be less ruthless or less  
enchanting.

But express yourselves,  
unbind yourselves,  
my sighs, for now I  
understand that  
Filli scorns me even when  
she's asleep.

Ride de' miei lamenti  
Certo questa crudele,  
E sprezza i preghi miei, le  
mie querele.  
Deggio per ciò partir senza  
conforto:  
Se vivo non mi vuoi, mi  
vedrai morto.

Mentre altrove il pie' s'invia,  
Io ti lascio in dolce oblio;  
Parto, Filli, anima mia,  
Questo sia l'ultimo a Dio.

In truth that cruel one  
ridicules my lamenting,  
and disdains my  
pleading, my mourning.  
Thus I must depart  
without consolation:  
If you don't want me alive,  
you'll see me dead.

As I go elsewhere  
I leave you in sweet oblivion;  
I'm leaving, Filli, my soul,  
let this be my last farewell.