

# WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 14 March 2023  
7.30pm

## Al-Bunduqiyya – The Lost Concerto

Giovanni Sollima cello

Federico Guglielmo violin

il Pomo d'Oro

Gianpiero Zanocco violin

Laura Andriani violin

Giulio d'Alessio viola

Kristina Chalmovska cello

Vanni Moretto double bass

Maria Shabashova harpsichord

Gianluca Geremia theorbo

Trad/Cypriot

Kartsilamades (I ballo Karsilama) *arranged by Giovanni Sollima*

Anon

Aria del Tasso 'Lieta ti prendo e poi' *arranged by Giuseppe Tartini*

Giovanni Sollima (b.1962)

Il Concerto Perduto (2021)

*I. Allegro • II. Andante • III. Allegro molto*

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Concerto for violin and cello in B flat RV547

*I. Allegro • II. Andante • III. Allegro molto*

Trad/Arbëresh

Moj e Bukura More (pub. 1708) *arranged by Giovanni Sollima*

*Interval*

Giovanni Sollima

Moghul (2018)

Trad/Cypriot

Kartsilamades (II ballo Karsilama) *arranged by Giovanni Sollima*

Kartsilamades (III ballo Karsilama) *arranged by Giovanni Sollima*

Antonio Vivaldi

Concerto for violin and cello in F RV544 'Il Proteo, ò sia Il Mondo al rovescio'

*I. Allegro • II. Largo • III. Allegro*

Recitativo. Grave from Violin Concerto in D RV208 'Grosso Mogul' (?by 1713)

Giovanni Sollima

The Family Tree from *When We Were Trees* (2007)

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Venice was in steep decline in Vivaldi's day. The maritime republic's governance by a self-selecting elite had long undermined its strength and confidence. Yet La Serenissima's reach far beyond the Venice lagoon guaranteed its supply of exotic imports, visitors and music from overseas among them. *Moje bukura More*, an Albanian song first published in 1708, evokes a traveller's longing for the beautiful land of Morea, the name adopted during the Middle Ages for the Peloponnese peninsula in southern Greece. Morea was by turns part of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires before it came under Venetian rule from 1684 to 1715. The *Kartsilamades*, a folk dance from Cyprus also known as *Antikrystós* or 'face-to-face', probably began life in northern Turkey and was taken to Greece by members of the large Anatolian Greek community. The dance doubtless reached Venice after the republic annexed Cyprus in the 1480s.

The cello, an offspring of the bass violin, was little more than half a century old when **Vivaldi** first wrote for it. He crafted over 20 concertos for solo cello, one for two cellos, and several more for cello and other instruments. The Concerto for violin and cello in B flat RV547, probably written during the 1720s for outstanding musicians among the foundling girls of the Ospedale della Pietà, engages both soloists in a dialogue of equals. The brief slow movement comprises call-and-response tunes passed between violin and cello followed by exquisite duo passages that run in parallel motion. Vivaldi raises pulse rates with the finale's blend of motor rhythms, syncopations and solo flourishes, testing the fitness of his soloists' technical prowess with a welter of scales, arpeggios and crafty articulations.

*Il Concerto Perduto* (2021) reflects **Giovanni Sollima's** dogged quest for two fragmentary Vivaldi cello concertos, the extant manuscripts of which carry inscriptions to 'Teresa', presumably one of his Pietà pupils. The work is drawn from the only surviving material for both concertos, parts for viola preserved in the library of the Venice Conservatory. Sollima based his homage to 'the lost concerto' on the viola line from the incomplete Cello Concerto in E minor RV787. 'It is not a reconstruction – it does not want to be,' he notes. 'It's not even a deconstruction. The viola part obviously lacks thematic material; however, it is extremely rich and precise even in the number of empty bars, regularly indicated and quantified. I took inspiration from all the elements present, "breathing in" everything that could suggest ideas to me. And I thought about Venice, a lost city,

well described in so many books, novels, artworks, films.'

*Il Proteo, ò sia Il Mondo al rovescio* takes its name from the shapeshifting sea god Proteus and its musical conceit from the idea of 'the world turned upside-down'. Vivaldi plays with the hierarchy of musical notation by writing the concerto's solo violin and cello parts in the other's clef. The subversive ploy extends to a reversal of the familiar pattern of his concertos' outer movements, with the opening *Allegro* here evoking a Carnival dance and the finale following the repetitive *ritornello* structure developed by Vivaldi for concerto first movements. The 'Grosso Mogul' Concerto, perhaps written around 1709, is named for the title held by the Mogul emperors of India. The flamboyant work, complete with notated cadenzas in its earliest source, was probably performed on the same bill as Vivaldi's setting of Domenico Lalli's opera libretto, *Il gran Mogol*, first staged in 1717 under the title *Agrippa*. Giovanni Sollima's *Moghul* (2018), written 300 years later, echoes the titles of Vivaldi's fiddle concerto and *Il gran mogol*, a long-lost flute concerto rediscovered in 2010 in the National Archives of Scotland among the papers of Lord Robert Kerr.

While *Moghul* contains no quotations from Vivaldi's pieces, it draws inspiration from their exotic theme. 'I'm Sicilian,' notes Sollima. 'And in Sicily it's easy to find many roots and stratifications of other cultures: lullabies, stories, rhymes, legends, perfumes, evocations, names, food, dances and the strong and current image of a world that moves from east to west full of hopes and dreams and that today we see daily in the newspapers.' *The Family Tree* belongs to Sollima's *When We Were Trees* (2007), a six-movement work originally for two cellos and strings inspired by thoughts about the environment and climate change. 'Talking about such things was less sensational then,' the composer recalls. '*The Family Tree* draws inspiration from the short last movement of a Cello Concerto in A minor RV419, one of two where Vivaldi uses the technique of variations on a ground bass. I have always seen these variations (and perhaps Vivaldi too) as a branched form in which each variant can unleash new thematic and formal ideas. Once the Vivaldi variations have finished, I hook myself with new ones, bringing the piece to other rhythmic, harmonic and territorial dimensions.'

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