

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 19 February 2022 7.30pm

Carolyn Sampson soprano

Tim Mead countertenor

Arcangelo

Jonathan Cohen director, piano

Michael Gurevich violin

Louise Ayrton violin

Jane Gordon violin

Tuomo Suni violin

Beatrice Philips violin

Rebecca Jones viola

Jonathan Manson cello

Tim Amherst double bass

Emmanuel Laporte oboe

Katie Lewis oboe

Joe Qiu bassoon

Thomas Dunford lute

Supported by the Rubinstein Circle

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) Silete venti HWV242 (c.1723-5)

Concerto Grosso in F Op. 3 No. 4 HWV315 (1740)

I. Andante - Allegro • II. Andante • III. Allegro • IV. Minuetto alternativo

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) Cessate, omai cessate RV684

Interval

Antonio Vivaldi Concerto for 2 violins in A minor Op. 3 No. 8 RV522 'L'estro armonico' (pub. 1711)
I. Allegro • II. Larghetto e spiritoso • III. Allegro

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden BWV1083 (c.1745-7) *based on Giovanni Pergolesi*

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From Italy to Germany

In the early 18th Century, the sights and sounds of Italy held an enduring appeal for Germans. Many German aristocrats visited Italy to view its art and architecture, and to experience music at its churches and theatres. Yet Italy also had connotations of moral corruption for Teutonic visitors: Protestants feared they might be converted there to Catholicism and consigned to eternal damnation; Northerners were bewitched by the voices of castrati, but fretted that these singers undermined conventional notions of masculinity.

Among the travellers heading south over the Alps were German musicians seeking the latest operatic styles. In 1706 **George Frideric Handel** travelled to Italy at the age of 21. He stayed there for four years, composing operas in Florence and Venice, and church music and cantatas in Rome. Later he would use his knowledge of Italian opera to create theatrical productions in London.

The fruits of Handel's Italian years are evident in his motet *Silete venti*. The virtuoso vocal writing requires a soprano or castrato as would be available in Italy. Although Handel is thought to have written the motet in London in the mid-1720s, it was unsuitable for Anglican use; he may instead have intended it for an Italian soprano or one of his former Italian patrons. During the overture, the crisp dotted rhythms are interrupted by mysterious soft chords. A similar effect occurs with the entry of the soprano, who (during a busy orchestral fugue) commands the rushing winds to be silent. The orchestra obeys immediately, with the mood changing to a *Larghetto*. Among the subsequent movements, 'Dulcis amor' paints a sensuous picture of the believer's spiritual love for Christ.

During his time in Rome, Handel encountered the violinist Arcangelo Corelli. According to one anecdote, Corelli did not play Handel's French overtures in the manner that the composer desired, leading Handel to snatch Corelli's violin in order to demonstrate the required 'fire and force'. How Handel adapted the Corellian concerto is evident in his Concerto Grosso in F Op. 3 No. 4. In Corelli's output, the concerto grosso involves a solo trio of two violins and cello, contrasted against the *tutti* string orchestra. Handel, however, used a greater variety of solo instruments in the concertos published as his Opus 3, such as an oboe in the concerto performed today. The opening is in the French style, exhibiting the spirited strength that Corelli reportedly did not comprehend. More Italianate is the ensuing *Andante* where the oboe spins a delicate melody over string accompaniment. A fugal movement and two minuets conclude this compendium of different national styles.

For northern visitors to Venice, one of the main attractions was the music of **Antonio Vivaldi**. For much of his career, Vivaldi taught at the Ospedale della Pietà, a girls' orphanage which used musical performances as a source of income. The girls gave concerts in the orphanage chapel, concealed behind a metal grille to protect them

from the eyes of male visitors. To catch the attention of audiences in this unusual venue, Vivaldi favoured styles involving virtuosic playing and strong dramatic contrasts.

Vivaldi's theatrical vocal writing is showcased in his cantata *Cessate, omai cessate*. Via two recitatives and arias, the singer complains at being rejected by the lover Dorilla. The aria 'Ah, ch'infelice sempre' evokes the pain caused by Dorilla's cruelty, with the vocal line unfolding over pizzicato strings. By the second aria, 'Nell'orrido albergo', grief has been replaced by anger: Vivaldi uses the rapid figuration and pulsing fanfares of an operatic rage aria, as the singer calls for revenge on the beloved. Cantatas such as this were performed in exclusive social circles in Italy, and handwritten copies were purchased by northern tourists as souvenirs of their Grand Tour.

Particularly renowned in northern Europe were Vivaldi's string concertos such as his Opus 3 set *L'estro armonico*. These showed the distinctive elements of his concerto writing: insistent rhythms, audacious harmonies, and a structure that alternates a *ritornello* theme with figuration for the soloists. Vivaldi's Concerto for 2 violins in A minor Op. 3 No. 8 was one of the compositions encountered by Johann Sebastian Bach around 1713, possibly via a copy bought by his patron Duke Johann Ernst of Weimar. The first movement is remarkable for its abundance of initial ideas, including chiselled chords, rapid scales and driving harmonic progressions. Bach arranged this concerto for solo organ, as a way to perform it himself while absorbing the features of Vivaldi's style.

In the last decade of his life, **Bach** again took an interest in fashionable Italian styles. Around 1745 he adapted the *Stabat mater* by Giovanni Pergolesi, setting it to the words *Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden*. Pergolesi wrote this work in 1736 in Naples, using operatic idioms to express Mary's pain at the crucifixion of her son. Within a few years, Bach had obtained a handwritten copy, perhaps via Italian musicians associated with the Dresden court. The Marian text was unsuitable for the Protestant churches of Leipzig, so Bach reworked the piece to the penitential words of Psalm 51. In the first movement, the intertwined dissonances representing the sorrow of Mary now become a plea to God to expunge sins. While some movements use the delicate slurred and syncopated figures of Neapolitan opera, others use the contrapuntal idiom known as the *stile antico* that had long appealed to Germans. In his arrangement, Bach elaborated Pergolesi's texture, replacing the original viola part (which doubles the bass) with an independent line. He thereby showed his ongoing fascination with Italian music, as well as his desire to improve it.

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George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Silete venti HWV242

(c.1723-5)

Anonymous

Sinfonia

Recitativo

Silete venti,
Nolite murmurare frondes,
Quia anima mea dulcedine
Requiescit.

Aria

Dulcis amor, Jesu care,
Quis non cupit te amare;
Veni, transfige me.
Si tu feris non sunt
clades:
Tuae plagae sunt suaves, quia
totus
Vivo in te.

Accompagnato

O fortunata anima,
O iucundissimus triumphus,
O felicissima laetitia

Aria

Date serta, date flores;
Me coronent vestri honores;
Date palmas nobiles.
Surgent venti et beatae spirent
Almae
Fortunate auras Caeli
fulgidas.

Presto

Alleluia.

Concerto Grosso in F Op. 3 No. 4 HWV315 (1740)

I. Andante - Allegro

II. Andante

III. Allegro

IV. Minuetto alternativo

Be silent, winds

Sinfonia

Recitative

Be silent, you winds,
and do not murmur, you branches,
because my soul is resting in
sweetness.

Aria

Sweet love, dear Jesus,
who does not desire to love Thee;
Come, transfix me.
If you strike me, there are no
injuries:
your strokes are sweet, because
I live totally in
You.

Accompagnato

O blessed soul,
O happiest triumph,
O most fortunate joy!

Aria

Give garlands, give flowers;
may your honours crown me;
give noble palms.
Let the winds arise and the blessed,
fortunate spirits
breathe the resplendent breezes
of Heaven.

Presto

Alleluia.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Cessate, omai cessate

RV684

Anonymous

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'anima,
Di toglier al mio cor riposo e
calma.
Povero core afflitto e
abbandonato,
Se ti toglie la pace
Un affetto tiranno,
Perchè un volto spietato,
un'anima infida
La sola crudeltà pasce ed
annida.

Ah, ch'infelice sempre
Mi vuol Dorilla ingrata,
Ah, sempre più spietata
M'astringe a lagrimar.
Per me non v'è ristoro,
Per me non v'è più spene,
E il fier martoro
E le mie pene
Solo la morte
Puo consolar.
Ah, ch'infelice sempre, ...

A voi dunque ricorro,
Orridi spechi, taciturni orrori,
Solitari ritiri ed ombre amiche;
Tra voi porto il mio duolo,
Perchè spero da voi quella
pietade
Che Dorilla inumana non
annida.
Vengo, spelonche amate,
Vengo, spechi graditi,
Alfine meco involto
In mio tormento in voi resti sepolto.

Nell'orrido albergo,
Ricetto di pene,
Potrò il mio tormento
Sfogare contento,
Potrò ad alta voce

Cease, henceforth cease

Cease, henceforth cease,
cruel memories
of despotic love;
heartless and pitiless,
you have turned my happiness
into immense sorrow.
Cease, henceforth cease
to tear my breast,
to pierce my soul,
to rob my heart of peace and
calm.
Wretched, injured and forsaken
you are, my heart,
if a tyrannical passion
can rob you of tranquillity
because a pitiless countenance,
a faithless soul,
harbours and nurtures nothing
but cruelty.

Ah, ungrateful Dorilla
wishes me to remain unhappy;
ah, ever more pitilessly
she forces out my tears.
For me there is no remedy,
for me there is no more hope.
This fierce torment
and my pain
only death
will assuage.
Ah, ungrateful Dorilla...

So it is to you,
gloomy places, silent horrors,
lonely caves and friendly shades,
that I come and bring my grief,
because I hope to obtain from
you the pity
that is not to be found in
ungrateful Dorilla.
Beloved caves, I come,
I come, welcoming caverns,
until finally, racked by my pains,
I will bury myself in you.

In this horrible refuge,
sheltering from my pains,
I shall be able to give vent,
to my grief,
I shall be able

Chiamare spietata	to call out;
Dorilla l'ingrata,	'Dorilla, heartless and ungrateful',
Morire potrò.	and to die.
Andrò d'Acheronte	I'll go to the gloomy banks
Su la nera sponda,	of Acheron,
Tingendo quest'onda	staining that stream
Di sangue innocente,	with my blameless blood,
Gridando vendetta	crying for revenge,
Ed ombra baccante	and, like the shade of a Bacchante,
Vendetta farò.	I will take my revenge.
Nell'orrido albergo...	In this horrible refuge...

Interval

Antonio Vivaldi

Concerto for 2 violins in A minor Op. 3 No. 8 RV522

'L'estro armonico' (pub. 1711)

I. Allegro

II. Larghetto e spiritoso

III. Allegro

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden BWV1083

(c.1745-7)

based on Giovanni Pergolesi

Picander, based on Psalm 51

Versus 1

Duet

Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden,	Blot out, Highest, my transgressions,
Deine Eifer lass verschwinden,	thy stern ardour let now vanish,
Lass mich deine Huld erfreuen.	let me now thy care enjoy.

Versus 2

Aria

Ist mein Herz in Missetaten	If my heart in sinful actions
Und in grosse Schuld geraten,	and in greatest guilt hath fallen,
Wasch es selber, mach es rein.	wash it thyself, make it clean.

Versus 3

Duet

Missetaten, die mich drücken,	Sinful actions which oppress me
Muss ich mir itzt selbst aufrücken;	I must now myself acknowledge;
Vater, ich bin nicht gerecht.	Father, I have not been just.

Versus 4

Aria

Dich erzürnt mein Tun und Lassen,	Thee offend my deeds and failings,
Tun und lassen musst du hassen,	deeds and failings scorn thou shouldst
Weil die Sünde mich geschwächt.	for my sins have made me weak.

Versus 5 & 6

Duet

Wer wird seine Schuld verneinen	Who will his own guilt deny then,
Oder gar gerecht erscheinen?	or indeed as just to claim it?
Ich bin doch ein Sündenknecht.	I'm in truth to sin a thrall.
Wer wird, Herr, dein Urteil mindern	Who will, Lord, thy judgment weaken,
Oder deine Ausspruch hindern?	or prevent thy sentence spoken?
Du bist recht, dein Wort ist recht.	Thou art fair, thy word is fair.

Versus 7

Duet

Sieh! Ich bin in Sünd empfangen	Lo, I was in sin conceived,
Sünde wurde ja begangen,	sinful deeds I've here committed
Da, wo ich erzeuget ward.	since the day I was conceived.

Versus 8

Aria

Sieh, du willst die Wahrheit haben,	Lo, thou wouldst the truth be given,
Die geheimen Weisheitsgaben	all the hidden gifts of wisdom
Hast du selbst mir offenbart.	thou thyself to me revealed.

Versus 9

Aria

Wasche mich doch rein von Sünden,	Wash me clean of my transgressions,
Dass kein Makel mehr zu finden,	that no spot more be discovered
Wenn der Isop mich besprengt.	when by hyssop I'm asperged.

Versus 10

Duet

Lass mich Freud und Wonne spüren,	Let me feel the joy and pleasure,
Dass die Beine triumphieren,	let me always gladly triumph,
Da dein Kreuz mich hart bedrängt.	when the cross me hard doth press.

Versus 11-15

Duet

Schaue nicht auf meine Sünden,	Do not look upon my errors,
Tilge sie, lass sie verschwinden.	blot them out, let them now vanish,
Geist und Herze mache neu.	heart and soul do thou renew.

Stoss mich nicht von deinen
Augen,
Und soll fort mein Wandel taugen,
O, so steh dein Geist mir bei.

Thrust me not from out thy
vision,
and if then my conduct merits,
O, then me thy spirit help.

Gib, o Höchster, Trost ins
Herze,
Heile wieder nach dem
Schmerze,
Es enthalte mich dein Geist.

Fill, O Highest, heart with
comfort,
health restore amidst my suff
'ring,
arm me with thy Spirit's strength.

Denn ich will die Sünder lehren,
Dass sie sich zu dir bekehren
Und nicht tun, was Sünde heisst.

For I would all sinners monish
that they be to thee converted
and not do what sin doth bid.

Lass, o Tilger meiner Sünden,
Alle Blutschuld gar verschwinden.
Dass mein Loblied, Herr, dich
ehrt.

Let, destroyer of my error,
every mortal crime now vanish
that my anthem, Lord, thee
praise.

Versus 16

Aria

Öfne Lippen, Mund und Seele,
Dass ich deinen Ruhm erzähle,
Der alleine dir gehört.

Open lips and mouth and spirit,
that I may thy fame be telling,
which alone to thee belongs.

Versus 17 & 18

Duet

Denn du willst kein Opfer haben,
Sonsten brächt ich meine
Gaben;
Rauch und Brand gefällt dir
nicht.

For no sacrifice thou seekest,
else I'd bring to thee my off
'ring;
smoke and flame content thee
not.

Herz und Geist, voll Angst und
Grämen,
Wirst du, Höchster, nicht
beschämen,
Weil dir das dein Herze bricht.

Heart and soul full fear and
terror
wilt thou, Highest, not confound
then,
for they cause thy heart to break.

Versus 19 & 20

Duet

Lass dein Zion blühend dauern,
Baue die verfallnen Mauern,
Alsdann opfern wir erfreut.

Let thy Zion last and flourish,
build again the fallen towers,
and we'll sacrifice with joy.

Alsdann soll dein Ruhm erschallen,
Alsdann werden dir gefallen
Opfer der Gerechtigkeit.

And then shall thy glory echo,
and then will to thee bring pleasure
off 'rings of pure righteousness.

Duet

Amen. Amen.

Amen.