

WIGMORE HALL

Monday 30 January 2023
1.00pm

Amazone

Lea Desandre mezzo-soprano

Jupiter Ensemble

Thomas Dunford lute, artistic director

Louise Ayrton violin

Augusta McKay Lodge violin

Jasper Snow viola

Salomé Gasselín viola da gamba

Arthur Cambreling cello

Hugo Abraham double bass

Violaine Cochard harpsichord, organ

Francesco Provenzale (1624-1704)

Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676)

Francesco Provenzale

Giovanni Buonaventura Viviani (1638-1693)

Georg Caspar Schürmann (1672-1751)

Carlo Pallavicino (c.1640-1688)

Anne Danican Philidor (1681-1728)

Marin Marais (1656-1728)

André Cardinal Destouches (1672-1749)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Georg Caspar Schürmann

Antonio Vivaldi

Giuseppe de Bottis (1678-1753)

Antonio Vivaldi

Non posso far from *Lo schiavo di sua moglie* (1672)

Sinfonia from *Ercole amante* (c.1661)

Lasciatemi morir from *Lo schiavo di sua moglie*

Muove il piè, furia d'Averno from *Mitilene, regina delle Amazoni* (1681)

Sinfonia pour la tempête from *Die getreue Alceste* (1719)

From *Antiope* (1687-9) *completed by Nicolaus Strungk*

Vieni, corri, volami in braccio

Sdegni, furori barbari

Venez, troupe guerrière from *Les amazones* (1700)

L'Américaine from *Suite d'un goût étranger* (pub. 1717)

Ô Mort! Ô triste mort from *Marthésie, reine des Amazones* (1699)

Overture: *I. Allegro* from *Ercole su'l Termodonte* RV710 (1723)

Non ha fortuna il pianto mio from *Die getreue Alceste*

Overture: *II. Andante* from *Ercole su'l Termodonte* RV710

Lieti fiori from *Mitilene, regina delle Amazzoni* (1707)

From *Ercole su'l Termodonte* RV710

Overture: *III. Allegro*

Onde chiare che sussurate

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The mythical Amazons might be considered some of the first feminists. In Ancient Greek legend, they came from the Black Sea coast of eastern Turkey and were superior to all men in strength, agility and combat. Hercules - a god, not a man - successfully confronted them in his Ninth Labour, when he had to retrieve a magic belt from their queen, Hippolyta. Amazons bore children but reared only their daughters, leaving their sons to the father whom they visited only for reproduction. They became popular subjects in 17th- and 18th-century opera, which so often treats on the conflict between men and women.

Shedding skirts and donning armour is a delight to the soprano in the opening aria, 'Non posso far' from the 1671 comic opera *Lo schiavo di sua moglie* ('The slave of his wife') by the father of Neapolitan opera **Francesco Provenzale**. She'll burst, she laughs to a melisma (one syllable on many notes). Naples came late to opera, but it was from the start a more popular entertainment than those works which began the art form in private aristocratic courts further north at the beginning of the century.

Playing catch-up, Naples imported operas from Venice, particularly those of **Francesco Cavalli** who collaborated with Provenzale. Cavalli was Monteverdi's pupil and successor as leading opera composer of the Republic. His fame spread to France, and he wrote *Ercole amante*, the story of Hercules and the Amazons, during his time in Paris in the early 1660s for the court of Louis XIV. Women are strong, might be the inference, but the Sun King stronger. The *Sinfonia's* tense slow opening suggests the hero's stealth. It is followed by a second aria from Provenzale's opera, 'Lasciatemi morir' ('Let me die'). Amazons knew grief too.

Florentine composer **Giovanni Buonaventura Viviani's** opera *Mitilene, regina delle Amazoni* was staged in Naples in 1681. The composer began his career as a violinist at the Innsbruck court but by 1670 had his own travelling opera company. Mitilene and her sisters also travelled, but as warriors, and had cities named after them, including the capital of Lesbos. The fiery aria 'Muove il piè, furia d'Averno' refers to a volcano near Naples which was supposed to be the gateway to hell. The aria unleashes brimstone.

Georg Caspar Schürmann began his career as a singer in North Germany. He composed *Die getreue Alceste* in 1719 for the opera at Brunswick. Queen Hippolyte uses her armour as a cross-gender disguise to be near her idol Hercules. The *Sinfonia* invokes a tempest – cue wind machine! An aria from the opera follows later.

Carlo Pallavicino produced operas in Venice where he also taught at an orphanage, and Dresden where in 1687 he wrote the first acts of *Antiope* to his son's libretto but died before completion. The story of the abduction of the Amazon Queen was then given a

happy ending by composer **Nicolaus Adam Strungk**. 'Vieni, corri, volami in braccio' is the latter's work. Antiope's Act II rejection provokes the jealous anger of the passionate flamenco-like aria 'Sdegni, furori barbari'.

Anne Danican Philidor belonged to a dynasty in royal service at Versailles, and had had at least five works for the stage produced by the age of 20. *Les amazones* is more spectacle than story and involves stylised processions for humans, animals and the royal family. The excerpt features, accompanied by warlike percussion, a duet for Hippolyte and Thalestris. The latter was the last Queen of the Amazons and, according to legend, had a relationship with Alexander the Great in the hope of bearing a daughter who might combine the best of both their warlike qualities.

Marin Marais was chief viol player at Versailles. He published five albums of viol music, the fourth containing the *Suite d'un goût étranger* ('foreign taste') in 33 movements including *L'Américaine*, a pretty dance in four-time. The connection between the Amazons of classical antiquity and the South American river was made by a 16th-century conquistador who was attacked by tribe in which women fought alongside men. The naïve view of 'primitive' cultures suggested by the music was the palatable norm. The viol is tuned as the lute and the instruments are interchangeable.

André Cardinal Destouches was a French adventurer and musketeer before he discovered his musical talent and found employment at the court of Louis XIV. His opera *Marthésie, reine des Amazones* was staged at the King's retreat of Fontainebleau outside Paris in October 1699. Marthesia (or Marpesia) was another Queen of the Amazons, who with her sister Lampedo claimed to be the daughter of the Ares, Greek god of war. She was not above pathos in her aria 'Ô Mort!'.

Antonio Vivaldi, who taught an orchestra of Amazons at a Venice orphanage, staged his opera *Ercole su'l Termodonte* at Rome's Teatro Capranica on 23 January 1723, the same year as the 'Four Seasons'. The *Overture* is in three movements (quick-slow-quick) interspersed here by two arias from other operas. The first is 'Non ha fortuna il pianto mio' from the Schürmann opera whose tempest was depicted earlier; the lousy weather matched Hippolyte's mood in the aria. The second, 'Lieti fiori', is a dreamy pastoral from another Mitilene opera by **Giuseppe de Bottis** who spent his entire career at Naples.

The finale is the aria 'Onde chiare che sussurate' from the Vivaldi opera. It begins by imitating birdsong in the same programmatic fashion as the composer used in the 'Four Seasons'. The singer exchanges phrases with the instruments, her undulating line matching the clear waves of the title.

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Francesco Provenzale (1624-1704)

Non posso far from *Lo schiavo di sua moglie* (1672)

Francesco Antonio Paolella

Non posso far che non proromp' in ridere se son le donne trasformate in uomini e dalla pugna non si san' dividere.	I cannot help but burst into laughter to see these women transformed into men and unable to tear themselves away from battle.
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All'erta o zerbini che quivi le donne	Look out, you dandies, for here the women
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Lasciate han' le gonne e armate si sono.	have discarded their skirts and armed themselves.
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S'offese voi le avete d'aggravi di monete chiedetegli perdono; che se vi dan'	If you have offended them say sorry by giving them more money; for if they start thwacking you
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Di piatto siete perduti affatto, Se gite sotto vi potran' uccidere,	you are quite lost, if you take a tumble, they can kill you.
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Non posso far che non proromp' in ridere.	I cannot help but burst into laughter.
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Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676)

Sinfonia from *Ercole amante* (c.1661)

Francesco Provenzale

Lasciatemi morir from *Lo schiavo di sua moglie*

Francesco Antonio Paolella

Lasciatemi morir stelle crudeli, Ch'il viver fra nemici è schiavitù,	Let me die, cruel stars, for to live among enemies is servitude;
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Se la caduta mia la sù ne' cieli	if my fall in the heavens above
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Fu stabilità non risorgo più.	was decreed, I shall not rise again.
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L'armi non sono mai, Non sono mai d'amor fedeli	Weapons are never, are never true expressions of love.
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Lasciatemi morir stelle crudeli.	Let me, let me die, cruel stars.
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Giovanni Buonaventura Viviani (1638-1693)

Muove il piè, furia d'Averno from *Mitilene, regina delle Amazoni*

(1681)

G Barbò

Muove il piè, furia d'Averno Con le serpi avvolte al seno. Spars' al core all'interno, Ho di Cerbero il veleno.	The fury of Avernus advances with serpents writhing around her breast. All around my heart I have the venom of Cerberus coursing.
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Georg Caspar Schürmann (1672-1751)

Sinfonia pour la tempête from *Die getreue Alceste* (1719)

Johann Ulrich von König, after Philippe Quinault

Carlo Pallavicino (c.1640-1688)

From *Antiope* (1687-9)
completed by Nicolaus Strungk
Stefano Benedetto Pallavicino

Vieni, corri, volami in braccio

Vieni, corri, volami in braccio, Che mercede donar ti vò. Farò ben io che nel diletto Goda quel petto, Ch'il cieco Dio per me piagò.	Come, hasten, fly to my embrace, I wish to grant you mercy. I shall see to it that pleasures shall delight that heart which the blind god wounded for me.
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Sdegni, furori barbari Anger, barbarous furies

Sdegni, furori barbari, Dove siete? V'accendete, Perfida gelosia, A quest'acciar D'ire ministra sia.	Anger, barbarous furies, where are you? Be ignited, perfidious jealousy, and let this sword be the minister of wrath.
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Anne Danican Philidor (1681-1728)

Venez, troupe guerrière **Come, warrior band**
from *Les amazones*

(1700)

Anonymous

Récitative

Thalestris:

Venez, troupe guerrière,
Amazones, venez dans ces
lieux plein d'appâts, vous
de qui l'âme fière ne
respire toujours que les
sanglants combats.

Recitative

Thalestris:

Come, warrior band,
Amazons, enter this place
full of allure, you whose
proud souls dream only
ever of bloody battles.

Récitative

Hippolyte:

Puisque tout est tranquille
aujourd'hui sur la terre,
Que tous les coeurs y sont
heureux,
Renouvelez par d'agréables
jeux
Ce qu'autrefois la
guerre
Avait de terrible et d'affreux.

Recitative

Hippolyte:

Since everything is at
peace today on earth,
and all hearts are happy
here,
make it your task, through
congenial games,
to renew that which
erstwhile war
made terrible and foul.

Duo

Thalestris et Hippolyte:

Combattons, courons à la
gloire,
Combattons,
animons-nous.
Ce n'est qu'en suivant la
victoire
Que nous trouvons les
plaisirs les plus doux.

Duet

Thalestris et Hippolyte:

Let us battle and hasten
to glory,
let us battle and rouse
ourselves.
It is only in the pursuit of
victory
that we attain the
sweetest pleasures.

Marin Marais (1656-1728)

L'Américaine from *Suite d'un goût étranger*

(pub. 1717)

André Cardinal Destouches (1672-
1749)

Ô Mort! Ô triste mort
from *Marthésie, reine*
des Amazones (1699)

Antoine Houdar de la Motte

Ô Mort ! Ô triste Mort !

Mon désespoir
t'appelle.

Viens, termine à la fois mes
malheurs et mes jours.

Seule tu peux éteindre une
flamme cruelle.

**O death! O unhappy
death!**

O death! O unhappy

death! My despair calls
out to you.

Come and end together
my sorrows and my life.

You alone can extinguish
a flame so cruel.

Je n'attends de
l'ingrat qu'une haine
éternelle,

Et tant que je vivrais, je
l'aimerais toujours.

From that ungrateful
man, I expect only
eternal hatred,

but as long as I live, I shall
love him forever.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Overture: I. Allegro from *Ercole su'l*
Termodonte RV710 (1723)

Antonio Salvi

Georg Caspar Schürmann

Non ha fortuna il pianto **My tears have not**
mio from *Die getreue* **succeeded**
Alceste

Johann Ulrich von König,
after *Philippe Quinault*

Non ha fortuna il pianto
mio,
In van desio averla un
di.

A gioia alcuna io non son
nata e
Sventurata moro
così.

My tears have not
succeeded,
they vainly hope to do so
one day.

I was not born for any
happiness
and thus wretched shall I
die.

Antonio Vivaldi

Overture: II. Andante from *Ercole su'l*
Termodonte RV710

Antonio Salvi

Giuseppe de Bottis (1678-1753)

Lieti Fiori from *Mitilene*, **Blessed flowers**
regina delle Amazzoni

(1707)

Anonymous

Lieti fiori, erbe odorose, deh
pietose,

Ristorate un cor che more.

Vaghi gigli e vaghe rose

Del mio seno mitigate il
grande ardore.

Blessed flowers, fragrant
and ah benevolent herbs,
revive a heart that is dying.
Lovely lilies and lovely roses,
relieve the great passion
in my heart.

Antonio Vivaldi

From *Ercole su'l Termodonte* RV710

Antonio Salvi

Overture: *III. Allegro* (1723)

Onde chiare che sussurate (1723)

Ippolita

Onde chiare che sussurate,

Ruscelletti che mormorate,

Consolate il mio
desio,

Dite almeno all'idol mio

La mia pena, e la mia brama.

Hippolyta

Clear, whispering ripples,

murmuring streams,

console this yearning of
mine;

go, at least, and tell my idol

of my suffering and desire.

All translations except 'Onde chiare che sussurate' © Robert Sargant, kindly provided by the artists. 'Onde chiare che sussurate' © Virgin Classics.