

WIGMORE HALL

Friday 5 April 2024
7.30pm

Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin

Bernhard Forck violin, concertmaster

Xenia Löffler oboe

Michael Bosch oboe

Gudrun Engelhardt violin I

Kerstin Erben violin I

Eduard Kotlyar violin I

Elfa Rún Kristinsdóttir violin II

Javier Aguilar Bruno violin II

Thomas Graewe violin II

Ildiko Ludwig viola

Clemens-Maria Nuszbaumer viola

Aleke Alpermann cello

Harald Winkler double bass

Raphael Alpermann harpsichord

Christian Beuse bassoon

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Suite from *Rodrigo* HWV5 (1707)

*I. Overture • II. Gigue • III. Sarabande • IV. Matelot •
V. Menuet • VI. Bourrée I – II • VII. Menuet •
VIII. Passcaglia*

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)

Sinfonia in B flat H658 (1773)

I. Allegro di molto • II. Poco adagio • III. Presto

Johann Wilhelm Hertel (1727-1789)

Oboe Concerto in G minor

I. Allegro • II. Arioso con affetto • III. Presto

Interval

Georg Phillip Telemann (1681-1767)

Ouverture burlesque in B flat TWV55:B8

*I. Ouverture • II. Scaramouches • III. Harlequinade • IV.
Colombine • V. Pierrot • VI. Menuet I and II • VII. Mezzetin
en Turc*

Anon

Concerto in G minor for 2 oboes, strings and continuo

I. Allegro moderato • II. Adagio • III. Allegro un poco

George Frideric Handel

Concerto grosso in G minor Op. 6 No. 6 HWV324 (1739)

*I. Largo affettuoso • II. A tempo giusto •
III. Musette. Larghetto • IV. Allegro • V. Allegro*

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George Frideric Handel's career can be divided into three parts: his early years in his native Germany, where he discovered his talent for opera; five years in Italy absorbing the style of leading composers there; and his many decades in London from 1712, first as an opera composer, then as a very successful writer of oratorios and concertos. Handel's influence pervaded British music right into the 19th Century, especially through works like his coronation anthems. His output of operas was considerable, more than forty works, and his first opera in Italy was the successful *Rodrigo*, with a story based on a 16th-century chronicle, premièred in Florence in 1707 but not revived until the 1980s. Rodrigo actually was a historical figure, the last Visigoth king of Spain, and the opera recounts his seizing of the throne, followed by various plot complications concerning his spurned queen, Rodrigo's mistress Florinda, his general Giuliano and his rival Evanco. Eventually Rodrigo abdicates as an act of penance – the opera's original title translates as 'To overcome oneself is the greater victory'. Unusually for Handel, the usual slow-fast *Overture* is followed by a complete suite of instrumental dances, including a lively *Passacaglia* with a solo violin part.

On 29 October 1739 Handel and his publisher John Walsh announced the subscription publication of *Twelve Grand Concerto's, in Seven Parts*, price 2 guineas, with the composer himself collecting the fees 'at his Home in Brook's-street' for delivery in April 1740. They were intended to capitalise on the success of his Op. 4 Organ Concertos of 1738. The new set comprised some of his finest instrumental music, and was intended both as standalone *concerti grossi* and also to be played between the sections of Handel's oratorios. Although the composer was a great recycler of his own music (and that of other composers), the set is largely new, and Op. 6 No. 6 completely so. The five movements include a slow triple-time introduction featuring strong dynamic contrasts, a striking chromatic fugue, an extended chaconne-like *Musette* (a favourite of the 18th-century music historian Charles Burney) and a vigorous *Allegro* with opportunities for solo display, finishing with a brief minuet-like binary-form dance.

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was the second son of JS Bach, and received a thorough training both as composer and performer at the hands of his father. His godfather was none other than Telemann, who he eventually succeeded as Kapellmeister in Hamburg. CPE Bach first studied law before taking up a musical position at the Berlin court of Prince Frederick of Prussia for thirty years from 1738. There he became one of the most eminent performers, composers and theorists of 18th-century Germany, and his treatise *Essay on the true art of playing keyboard instruments* remained influential right into the Romantic period. CPE was aware early on that he would need to move away from his father's Baroque style in order to create a compositional identity of his own, and so developed a rather sophisticated form of musical rhetoric called the *empfindsamer Stil* ('sensitive style'), used

especially in his keyboard and chamber music. His public works, such as his numerous symphonies and concertos, were largely intended for the pleasure of middle-class audiences; however, the six string symphonies Wq. 182 were commissioned by the wealthy connoisseur Gottfried van Swieten as private works in an advanced style. The second symphony, in B flat, is typical of the set, with frequent changes of mood, texture and style, and demanding considerable virtuosity: the first movement includes rushing scales and wide leaps, and is followed by a delicate and pensive slow movement, before the energy is restored in the *Presto* finale.

Johann Wilhelm Hertel was born into a well-established musical family in Eisenach, where his father was director of music at the court. He studied harpsichord and violin, and became court composer to the Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Hertel was evidently a trusted figure there, becoming a court counsellor. His music is in the *galant* style, influenced by CPE Bach and lying between the Baroque and the Classical, and his output covers numerous vocal and orchestral works, among the latter a series of unusually-scored concertos, including three for harp and one for 8 timpani. The three-movement G minor work is his only extant concerto for oboe.

Georg Philipp Telemann was born in Magdeburg and was probably the most prolific composer in history, with some 3000 works surviving. He studied law at the University of Leipzig in his early twenties but turned instead to music, and from 1721 was musical director of Hamburg's five main churches, where he remained until his death, the most respected composer in Germany. The *Ouverture burlesque* has eight movements, with the opening *Ouverture* followed by a sequence of dances, by turns lively or comical, depicting characters from the Italian *commedia dell'arte* tradition, including Scaramouche, Harlequin, Colombine, Pierrot and Mezzetin.

The **Anonymous** Concerto in G minor for 2 oboes survives in an extensive collection of music manuscripts from the Dresden court that was stashed away in a large cupboard in the Hofkirche and only rediscovered in 1867. Although no composer's name is given, it is likely that the concerto is the work of Johann Georg Pisendel (1688-1755), concertmaster of the famous Dresden orchestra. Of the usual Italianate three movements, the first showcases fashionable triplet movement, as the oboes imitate and compete with each other. The slow movement uses the strings as harmonic accompaniment to the complex melodic dialogue of the soloists above, while the energetic finale owes something to Vivaldi's concerto style. Pisendel studied in Leipzig, knew many of the leading composers of the day, including Bach, Telemann, Heinichen and Vivaldi, and also taught some of the leading performers of the following generation.

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