

WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 6 December 2022
7.30pm

Ian Bostridge tenor
Cappella Neapolitana

Antonio Florio conductor
Marco Piantoni violin I
Rossella Croce violin I
Yayoi Masuda violin I

Patrizio Focardi violin II
Paolo Cantamessa violin II
Nunzia Sorrentino violin II
Geraldine Roux viola

Alberto Guerrero cello
Pierluigi Ciapparelli theorbo
Giorgio Sanvito double bass
Angelo Trancone harpsichord

Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676)

Misero, così va from *Eliogabalo** (1667)

Alessandro Stradella (1639-1682)

Soffrirà, spererà from *Il Corispero** (c.1677)

Antonio Cesti (1623-1669)

Sinfonia from *L'Argia** (1655)

Berenice, ove sei from *Il Tito** (1666)

Antonio Sartorio (1630-1680)

Sinfonia from *L'Orfeo** (1672)

Francesco Provenzale (1624-1704)

Deh rendetemi from *La Stellidaura vendicante** (1674)

From *Lo schiavo di sua moglie** (1672)

Sinfonia • Che spero mio core

Interval

Cristoforo Caresana (c.1640-1709)

Tien ferma Fortuna from *Le avventure di una fede**

Giovanni Legrenzi (1626-1690)

Sinfonia from *Totila** (1677)

Leonardo Vinci (c.1696-1730)

Gelido in ogni vena from *Siroe, re di Persia** (1726)

Nicola Fago (1677-1745)

From *Il Faraone sommerso** (1709)

Nuove straggi e spaventi • Sinfonia

Leonardo Vinci

Se il mio paterno amore from *Siroe, re di Persia** (1726)

Sinfonia from *Partenope** (1725)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Gelido in ogni vena from *Farnace* RV711** (1727)

*arranged by Antonio Florio **arranged by Alessandro Ciccolini



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Tormento d'Amore

The torments of love have been the subject of opera from its start around 1600. It was presented as wedding entertainment in lavish productions staged by the nobility in private courtly venues, but from around 1650 opera became popular carnival entertainment in public theatres, beginning in Venice. The less rarified settings promoted interest in the natural male voice as distinct from the other-worldly church-born castrati who nonetheless remained the superstars. The tenor Ian Bostridge follows love's pangs between the cities in arias conceived for his voice. They show the evolution of ABA or *da capo* (from the top) form which became predominant in Naples, the leading opera city in the 18th Century. They are interspersed with orchestral overtures (sinfonias) which mostly comprise a slow tantalising introduction and a joyful spirited dance.

Francesco Cavalli was born in Crema where the governor adopted him and sent him to Venice to be trained as a tenor and composer in St Mark's Basilica under Monteverdi. His first works date from the 1620s. Late in his career he composed *Eliogabalo*, on the Roman emperor whose regime included orgiastic loving until he was assassinated aged 20. The lament 'Misero, così va' regrets that beauty and fidelity seem incompatible over a ground bass, a continually repeating sequence of four notes. The opera was commissioned for the Venice carnival in 1668 but Cavalli had become unfashionable and it was cancelled. The première took place only in 1999.

Alessandro Stradella was orphaned from a wealthy Roman family and learned to live on his wits. He sang, played the lute, and starred in the entourage of Queen Christina of Sweden who had abdicated, converted to Catholicism and emigrated to Rome where she opened the first opera house in 1671 with a work by Cavalli, who was still popular there. Stradella wrote *Il Corispero* for Rome before fleeing financial and amorous scandals there. 'Soffrirà, spererà' dances in flighty three-time with two violins in fugal pursuit ending as abruptly as his life at the hands of an assassin in a Genoese piazza.

Antonio Cesti, born in Arezzo, was a choirboy turned monk, in trouble over an affair. He took his skills abroad to Innsbruck where he wrote *L'Argia* for Queen Christina en route to Rome in 1655. Its *Sinfonia* for twin violins and bass begins slowly, featuring dramatic silences before a euphoric skip. The opera was revived in Venice where in 1666 his *Il Tito* was staged. Roman General Titus loves the Biblical Jewish Queen Berenice. Her lover Polemon despairs and sings heart-rendingly 'Berenice, ove sei?' with a passage of recitative before the repeat.

Antonio Sartorio lived and died in Venice with a spell at a German ducal court. Venice staged his operas, including *L'Orfeo* in 1672. Its *Sinfonia* has four string parts above the bass playing ten bars of sombre chords before leaping into tumbling scales and syncopated, dotted tune.

Francesco Provenzale lived and died in Naples, becoming the father of Neapolitan opera. His 1674 revenge

opera *La Stellidaura vendicante* includes 'Deh rendetemi', a plea sung by a lover before his rival kills him. The lilting melody has a folk-like quality. The *Sinfonia* of *Lo schiavo di sua moglie* – 'The slave of his wife', a domestic comedy – has two parts, both quick, in four and three, light as dancing sunbeams. The bitter 'Che spero o mio core' defies laughter though in falling semitones. A melodic middle section provides a contrast – classic *da capo*.

Cristoforo Caresana, born in Venice, moved to Naples in his 20s. He sang tenor in the chapel royal of the Spanish viceroy and succeeded Provenzale at the cathedral. His vocal exercises were still being published in the 19th Century. His opera *Le avventure di una fede* contains a plea to Lady Luck in 'Tien ferma Fortuna' – 'Lady Fortune, hold still' – which trips boldly in six-eight time.

Giovanni Legrenzi, born poor in Bergamo, died rich in Venice, and was Sartorio's successor at St Mark's after filling various positions including choirmaster of a Venice orphanage in 1676, the year before he composed the opera *Totila*. Its *Sinfonia* – slow intro, sprightly dance – lasts barely two minutes.

Leonardo Vinci moved from his birthplace in Calabria to Naples where he wrote comic operas in Neapolitan dialect. He graduated to serious opera like *Siroe, re di Persia*, about the Shah who would murder his rebellious son. He sings 'Gelido in ogni vena' of his regret, his chilled blood flowing with a syncopated pulse on the extended vowel of *sangue* – 'blood'.

Nicola Fago, born in Taranto, died in Naples, studied under Provenzale and succeeded Caresana at the cathedral. He wrote *Il Faraone sommerso* – 'the pharaoh drowned' – in 1709, on the subject of the Biblical crossing of the Red Sea. In 'Nuove straggi e spaventi', Moses sings of new torments unleashed if the freedom of God's people continues to be denied. The middle looks to liberty with the syllables of *libertà* stretched for emphasis. The *Sinfonia* runs slow-quick-slow with dramatic pauses intensifying the slow sections.

Vinci's *Siroe* begins with an aria sung by the Shah on the subject of paternal love. The drawn-out vowel of *padre* has a pleading sense. The *Sinfonia* of his 1725 opera *Partenope* has three sections: quick-slow-quick. Parthenope, named after the siren rejected by Odysseus washed up on the shore there, was the name of a colony in what would later become Naples.

Finally **Antonio Vivaldi** sets familiar words 'Gelido in ogni vena' in his 1727 opera *Farnace*. They had previously appeared in Vinci's *Siroe*. In Vivaldi the Roman general Pompey sings with horror of infanticide. Vivaldi feels keenly the ice and uses music borrowed from the *Four Seasons*'s 'Winter'. Biting dagger-like staccato chords contrast with the singer's viscous vowel on *sangue*. In the middle section – the boy is innocent – Vivaldi inverts the melody providing some relief at last to the torment.

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Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676)

Misero, così va from *Eliogabalo* (1667)

arranged by Antonio Florio

Anonymous, completed by Aurelio Aureli

Io resto solo? No,
Che tu mi lasci in compagnia
le Furie,
Figlie del tuo rigor, inique
ingiurie.

Am I now alone? No,
for you have left me the
Furies as companions,
daughters of your cruelty,
wicked indignities.

Misero, così
va
Che fidel t'adorò?
Traditrice beltà!
Infelice, che
fo?
Stolto non
m'avvisai
Che con beltà fè non si trova
mai?
Languidi miei sospir,
Uscite pur, ahimè!
Così d'aspro martir
Si premia la mia
fé?
Stolto non
m'avvisai,
Che con beltà fé non si trova
mai?

Is he who faithfully
adored you
left thus in misery?
Traacherous beauty!
Despondent, what am I to
do?
Was I foolish enough not
to know
that fidelity never
accompanies beauty?
Despairing sighs of mine,
go forth then, alas!
Is my loyalty thus rewarded
with such bitter
punishment?
Was I foolish enough not
to know
that fidelity never
accompanies beauty?

Alessandro Stradella (1639-1682)

Soffrirà, spererà from // This proud soul will *Corispero* (c.1677) suffer and hope

arranged by Antonio Florio

Pietro Cesare Gallerati

Soffrirà, spererà quest'alma
altera
E bella e severa stancare
osarà,
Sì, sì forse un dì sarammi
permesso
Bramare ed ottenere a un
punto istesso.

This proud soul will suffer
and hope,
fair and austere it will
dare to stand firm.
Yes one day, perhaps, I
shall be allowed
both to wish and have my
wish granted.

Antonio Cesti (1623-1669)

Sinfonia from *L'Argia* (1655)

arranged by Antonio Florio

Berenice, ove sei from *Il Tito* (1666)

arranged by Antonio Florio

Nicolò Beregan

Berenice, ove sei?
Dove t'ascondi?
Luce degli occhi miei?
Berenice ove sei?
Marmi o voi, che nel candore
Pareggiate la mia fe',
Per pietate palesate il mio
sol,
Dite dov'è.

Folle, ma con chi
parlo?
Ah che l'empia,
l'indegna,
Conscia di sue lascivie,
E de' miei torti,
Rapida qual baleno,
S'è ricovrata al nuovo
amante in seno.

Furori armatemi,
Tutto ingombratemi
Di stigio ardor.
Cada svenata, e
lacerata
L'empia
spietata
Che già rapimmi
Con l'alma il cor.

Berenice, where are you?

Berenice, where are you?
Where are you hiding,
light of my eyes?
Berenice, where are you?
O statue, you whose marble
is as pure as my fidelity,
for pity's sake, reveal my
sun,
tell me where she is.

But am I mad? Who am I
talking to?
The faithless, unworthy
woman,
aware of her lustful ways
and of my wrongdoing,
has taken refuge,
as fast as lightning, in a
new lover's arms.

Strengthen my arm, O fury,
and fill me with
Stygian might.
Let her fall, wounded and
bleeding,
that pitiless, inhuman
woman
who has stolen
both my heart and my soul.

Antonio Sartorio (1630-1680)

Sinfonia from *L'Orfeo* (1672)

arranged by Antonio Florio

Francesco Provenzale (1624-1704)

Deh rendetemi ombre
care from *La* Restore to me, dear
shadows

Stellidaura vendicante
(1674)

arranged by Antonio Florio
Andrea Perrucci

Deh rendetemi ombre
care Restore to me, dear
shadows,
Il mio ben che mi rapiste.
the love you have stolen
from me.
O bellezze uniche e rare,
O rare and unique beauty,
ah, you have vanished
from my sight.
Rispondetemi larve cortesi
Answer me, gracious spirits.
Chi l'estinta mia mi rubò?
Who has taken my dead
love from me?
Deh qual nume ch'io forse
Which god, whom I have
perhaps offended,
Dai miei lumi
has hidden her away from
my eyes?

From *Lo schiavo di sua moglie* (1672)

Francesco Antonio Paolella

Sinfonia

arranged by Antonio Florio

Che spero mio core
arranged by Antonio Florio What hope is left to
you, my heart?

Che spero mio core
core What hope is left to you,
my heart?
Hai troppi nemici;
You have too many
enemies;
A tanto furore,
what can you do
Che far potrai tu? in the face of such rage?

Le stelle adirate,
The wrathful stars,
Con furie ultrici,
conspiring together
Tra lor congiurate
with vengeful furies,
Si sono di più.
are too numerous.

E quand'altri non v'è,
And even in their absence,
Sempre a'tuoi danni
those tyrants
Amore e Gelosia
Love and Jealousy
Fan da tiranni.
will always be against you.

Interval

Cristoforo Caresana (c.1640-1709)

Tien ferma Fortuna
from *Le avventure di* Lady Fortune, hold
still

una fede

arranged by Antonio Florio
Anonymous

Tien ferma Fortuna
La ruota per me
Né il lubrico piè
Su base ruotante
Si fermi incostante
Per doglia importuna.
Il crine disciolto
Annodami il cor
Né rieda il dolor
Che fiero mi rende
In spesse vicende
Bramato il tuo volto.
Lady Fortune, hold still
your wheel for me,
let untimely sorrow
not allow your foot
disloyally to slip and
turn it upon its base.
Bind my heart
with your flowing locks,
let your much desired face
not rekindle the pain
that has made me fight
through life's many turns.

Giovanni Legrenzi (1626-1690)

Sinfonia from *Totila* (1677)

arranged by Antonio Florio

Leonardo Vinci (c.1696-1730)

Gelido in ogni vena
from *Siroe, re di Persia* I feel ice-cold blood

(1726)

arranged by Antonio Florio
Pietro Metastasio

Gelido in ogni vena
Scorrer mi sento il sangue,
L'ombra del figlio esangue
M'ingombra di terror.
I feel ice-cold blood run
through my every vein;
the shade of my dead son
fills me with terror.

E per maggior mia
pena
Vedo che fui crudele
A un'anima fedele,
A un innocente cor.
And to make my pain
worse,
I see now that I was cruel
to a faithful soul,
an innocent heart.

Nicola Fago (1677-1745)

From *Il Faraone sommerso* (1709)

Anonymous

**Nuove straggi e
spaventi**

arranged by Antonio Florio

Nuove straggi e spaventi
L'aria apprestando va'.
Nuovi mostri e portenti
Irato il ciel
darà,
Se duro ancor
negate
Al Popolo di Dio la libertà .

**New carnage and
fear**

New carnage and fear
are about to be unleashed.
New monsters and portents
will rain down from a
wrathful heaven,
if you pitilessly continue
to deny
God's people their freedom.

Sinfonia

arranged by Antonio Florio

Leonardo Vinci

**Se il mio paterno
amore from *Siroe, re di***

Persia

arranged by Antonio Florio

Pietro Metastasio

Se il mio paterno amore
Sdegnà il tuo core altero,
Più giudice severo
Che padre a te sarò.
E l'empia fellonia
Che forse volgi in mente
Prima che adulta sia
Nascente opprimerò.

**If your proud heart
rejects**

If your proud heart rejects
my paternal love,
I shall be more of a judge
than a father to you.
And I shall crush at birth
any acts of wickedness
you may have in mind,
before they can mature.

Sinfonia from *Partenope* (1725)

arranged by Antonio Florio

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

**Gelido in ogni vena
from *Farnace* RV711**

(1727)

arranged by Alessandro
Ciccolini

Pietro Metastasio

Gelido in ogni vena,
Scorrermi sento il sangue,
L'ombra del figlio esangue
M'ingombra di terror.

E per maggior mia
pena,

Vedo che fui crudele
A un'anima innocente,
Al core del mio cor.

I feel ice-cold blood

I feel ice-cold blood run
through my every vein;
the shade of my dead son
fills me with terror.

And to make the pain
worse,

I see now that I was cruel
to a faithful soul,
an innocent heart.

Translations by Susannah Howe