

WIGMORE HALL 125

Wednesday 28 January 2026
7.30pm

The English Concert
Harry Bicket director, harpsichord
Kate Lindsey mezzo-soprano

Nadja Zwiener violin I

Davina Clarke violin I

Anna Curzon violin I

Mark Seow violin I

Tuomo Suni violin II

Elizabeth MacCarthy violin II

Annie Gard violin II

Ruiqi Ren violin II

Louise Hogan viola

George White viola

Joseph Crouch violoncello

Jonathan Byers violoncello

Jan Zahourek double bass

Sergio Bucheli theorbo

Clara Espinosa Encinas oboe

Grace Scott Deuchar oboe

Tom Foster harpsichord, organ

Aisling Kenny ripieno soprano

Amy Wood ripieno soprano

Sarah Anne Champion ripieno alto

Amy Lyddon ripieno alto

Peter Harris ripieno tenor

Thomas Herford ripieno tenor

Robert Davies ripieno bass

Christopher Webb ripieno bass

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)

Concerto grosso in D Op. 6 No. 1 (pub. 1714)

I. Largo - Allegro • II. Largo - Allegro •

III. Largo • IV. Allegro • V. Allegro

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Trio Sonata in D minor Op. 1 No. 12 RV63 'La follia' (pub. 1705)

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

From *Agrippina* HWV6 (1709)

*Coll'ardor del tuo bel core • Quando invita la donna
l'amante • Come nube che fugge dal vento*

Interval

Overture-Suite from *Rodrigo* HWV5 (1707)

Overture • Gigue • Sarabande •

Matelot • Bourrée • Menuet • Passacaille

Donna, che in ciel HWV233 (1707)



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The first decade of the 18th Century - the period of all this evening's music - saw a flowering of music in Italy; genres such as opera, sonata and concerto that had been established during the previous century were now expanded and developed by a large number of talented composers based in Rome, Venice and other major cities, including Albinoni, Caldara, Corelli, the Marcellos, Alessandro Scarlatti, Torelli and Vivaldi. The court and church patronage system that had at first sustained Monteverdi and his contemporaries gave way to a more commercial environment, with leading performers and composers sought out by audiences, publishers, institutions and wealthy patrons alike. Many northern European composers travelled to Italy to hone their skills, including the young George Frederic Handel.

Arcangelo Corelli was a key figure in the development of the concerto and the sonata and, thanks to wide circulation of his six published collections throughout Europe, became one of the best-known composers of the 18th Century. His influence on subsequent composers - especially Handel - was very significant, and even François Couperin in France placed him at the musical summit of Parnassus in his suite *L'apothéose de Corelli* of 1726. All of Corelli's publications - solo sonatas, trio sonatas and concertos - were for strings only, and as composer and teacher he had a significant impact on violin technique. His last set was a collection of 12 Concerti Grossi, Op. 6 (published in 1714 but written somewhat earlier), which contrast a small solo concertino group with the remainder of the ensemble. The first concerto is of the *concerti da chiesa* type, alternating melodic slow movements with energetic fast movements; the final *Allegro* is a fugue, showing off Corelli's contrapuntal skills.

Antonio Vivaldi was the most important of Corelli's Italian successors, and was also a virtuoso violinist. He was enormously productive as a composer, having been given dispensation from his church duties despite having been ordained as a priest. As well as writing more than 500 concertos he also claimed to have composed 94 operas (parts of about two dozen survive), and taught for many years at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, a girls' orphanage best known for functioning as a legendary music conservatoire. As with the madrigal in the 16th Century, Italian Baroque composers had a touchstone repertoire for their first publication - the trio sonata, for two violins and continuo. While Vivaldi's Op. 1 *Suonate da Camera a tre* (Venice, 1705) are clearly modelled on Corelli, he consciously tries to outdo the latter's model in the last of the set, which comprises 20 variations on the *La Folia* ground bass in D minor. Corelli's version is for solo violin with bass, so Vivaldi goes one better and adds a second instrument, with a virtuoso continuo line underpinning fast repeated notes, scalar imitation, rich harmonic suspensions, interlocking fragments,

bass syncopations and an endless variety of tempo and texture.

The career of George Frederic Handel 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, starting as an opera composer then becoming a very successful writer of oratorios and concertos. *Agrippina* was first given at the Teatro San Giovanni Grisostomo in Venice on 26 December 1709, and more than two dozen performances followed. The plot is related to that of Monteverdi's earlier *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1642), except that the title character is now the wife of emperor Claudius, Agrippina. Three of the arias sung by Agrippina's son Nero (originally a castrato role), whom she wants to succeed Claudius, include 'Coll'ardor del tuo bel core' (May your dear heart's passion), 'Quando invita la donna l'amante' (When a woman invites her lover) and 'Come nube che fugge dal vento' (As a cloud flies from the wind). The first two are addressed to Poppea, whom Nero is chasing, whereas in the third he decides to renounce love for ambition - and the opera indeed ends with Nero getting his wish, and the throne.

Handel's output of operas was considerable, more than 40 works, and his first such work in Italy was *Rodrigo*, with a story based on a 16th-century chronicle, premièred in Florence in 1707. Rodrigo was actually a historical figure, the last Visigoth king of Spain, and the opera recounts his seizing of the throne, followed by various plot complications that culminate in his noble abdication. The usual slow-fast *Overture* is followed by a suite of instrumental dances, including a lively *Passacaille* with a solo violin part.

Donna, che in ciel is an unusual work in Handel's output: a virtuoso Italian-language solo cantata on a sacred (but non-liturgical) theme. It was composed for the anniversary of the deliverance of Rome from a 1703 earthquake on the feast of the Purification of the Virgin, and probably first performed on 2 February 1708. After an orchestral *Introduzione* (which Handel re-used as the overture to *Agrippina* the following year) there follow an alternating series of recitatives and dramatic arias, ending with the chorus 'Maria, salute e speme' (Mary, health and hope). There is a prominent solo violin part, and in the accompanied recitative 'Torna immobile in grembo' (Return motionless) trills in the strings vividly represent the shaking of the earthquake. Handel also tries out some musical ideas which were to appear in later works in London, such as the Op. 6 Concerti Grossi. The anonymous narrative libretto praises the Virgin for 'saving' Rome - in fact, the destruction and loss of in 1703 had been considerable - describing her as the 'beautiful serene star'.

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Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)

Concerto grosso in D Op. 6 No. 1 (pub. 1714)

- I. Largo - Allegro
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- IV. Allegro
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Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Trio Sonata in D minor Op. 1 No. 12 RV63 'La follia' (pub. 1705)

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

From *Agrippina* HWV6 (1709)
Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani

Coll'ardor del tuo bel core	May your dear heart's passion
Coll'ardor del tuo bel core Fa' più rapidi i momenti!	May your dear heart's passion make the moments pass more quickly!
Che famelico il mio amore troppo è già de' suoi contenti.	For my love is already quite ravenous for its satisfaction.
Quando invita la donna l'amante	When a woman invites her lover
Quando invita la donna l'amante, È vicino d'amore il piacer.	When a woman invites her lover, love's pleasure is close at hand.
Il dir, 'Vieni ad un istante', Egli è un dir, 'Vieni a goder!'	When she says: 'Come straightaway', what she means is: 'Come and enjoy yourself!'
Come nube che fugge dal vento	Just as a cloud flies from the wind
Come nube che fugge dal vento, Abbandono sdegnato quel volto.	Just as a cloud flies from the wind, I renounce her despised face.
Il mio foco nel seno già spento, Di quest'alma già il laccio è disciolto.	The fire is cold within my breast; my heart has already loosed its chain.

Interval

George Frideric Handel

Overture-Suite from *Rodrigo* HWV5 (1707)

- Overture
- Gigue
- Sarabande
- Matelot
- Bourrée
- Menuet
- Passacaille

Donna, che in ciel HWV233 (1707) <i>Anonymous</i>	Woman, who in heaven
Introduzione	
Recitativo. Donna, che in ciel di tanta luce splendi Donna, che in ciel di tanta luce splendi E con tua luce fai sì chiaro il mondo, Oggi è quel dì giocondo In cui togliesti noi del gran periglio, Oggi all'irato Figlio Tenesti il braccio già a ferire inteso Ever noi, per te reso Di giudice severo amante Padre, Mostrasti quanto può voler di Madre.	Recitative. Donna, che in ciel di tanta luce splendi Our Lady, you who shine with such light in heaven and whose light so brightly illumines the earth, today is that happy day on which you saved us from great danger, the day on which you restrained your angered Son's arm, already raised to strike, and, by turning a severe judge into a loving Father, showed us all that a Mother should be.
Vacillò, per terror del primo errore Vacillò, per terror del primo errore Con la terra ogni mortale.	Vacillò, per terror del primo errore When the earth began to quake, so too did all mortals, from fear of man's original sin.
Si girò un tuo sguardo tutto amore, Che sbandì l'ira fatale.	Yet you turned your loving gaze upon us and banished the fatal wrath.
Work continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.	

Recitativo accompagnato.
Torna immobile in
grembo
Torna immobile in
grembo
All'antico suo centro il grave
pondo.
S'apre l'orrido
nembo
E lascia a' rai del sole aperto
il varco;
Con bei colori in
arco
Già trionfa la pace, e lo
dimostra
Il pianeta maggior con suoi
splendori.
Grida dal fosco suolo:
Ecco sereno il polo,
Ecco il segno
gradito!
Il Popolo
pentito.
E tu dall'alto l'opra tua
rimiri
Li nostri voti accogli ed i
sospiri.

Aria. Adagio: Tu sei la bella
serena stella
Tu sei la bella
Serena stella
Ch'il porto addita
Della pietà.
E per te lieta,
Alla sua meta,
Alma pentita
Sicura va.

Recitativo. Pur nella via che
resta
Pur nella via che resta
Incerta ancora al nostro
errante piede,
Sola non sarà
questa
Grazia dell'amor tuo degna
mercede,
Che nostra speme è
resa
Certa per te d'un immortal
difesa.

Recitativo
accompagnato. Torna
immobile in grembo
The great weight of the
world returns
to stillness in its rightful
place.
The dark clouds part,
allowing
the sun's rays to shine
through;
the fine colours of the
rainbow
mark the triumph of
peace, and the
supreme star reveals its
splendour.
The repentant people
cry out from the dark earth:
'Behold the tranquil
heavens,
behold the welcome
portent!'
And from on high you
regard your work
and receive our prayers
and sighs.

Aria. Adagio: Tu sei la
bella serena stella
You are the fair
and serene star
that points to
the haven of mercy.
Through your guidance,
the repentant soul
reaches its destination
safely and joyfully.

Recitativo. Pur nella via
che resta
And as we walk a path
that still quakes beneath
our feet,
this deliverance will not
be the only
noble pledge of your
love,
since you have given us
certain hope
of your everlasting
protection.

Aria. Allegro: Sorga pure
dall'orrido averno
Sorga pure dall'orrido
Averno,
Nera vampa d'eterno
furor.
Un sol lampo dell'alma tua
luce
Tanto lume in un core
produce
Che più vede nel mezzo
all'orror.

Recitativo. Dunque a te
diamo lodi
Dunque a te diamo lodi,
Donna invitta del ciel, la cui
possanza
Oggi ne frange i
nodi
Del mal presente, e di quel
mal che avanza
ne toglie alle
cadute,
divenuta per noi speme e
salute.

Aria con coro. Maria, salute e
speme
Maria, salute e speme
del mondo afflitto e del
mortal che langue.
Per te l'ira che
freme
estingua la sua face in mar di
sangue.
E pace e gioia
sia
a noi qua giù come nel ciel,
Maria.

Aria. Allegro: Sorga pure
dall'orrido averno
Let the dark fires of
eternal fury
flare up from the black
depths of Hell.
For a single flash of your
divine radiance
fills the heart with so
much light
that it will seem more clearly in
the midst of horror.

Recitativo. Dunque a te
diamo lodi
Therefore we praise you,
invincible Queen of heaven,
you whose power
shatters the chains of the
danger
we face today and will
rescue us from
the dangers into which
we fall in future,
for that power is our hope
and salvation.

Aria con coro. Maria,
salute e speme
Mary, salvation and hope
of the troubled world and
dispirited mankind,
by your grace may the
fury that has shaken us
extinguish its flaming
torch in a sea of blood.
And may peace and joy
accompany us
on earth as they will in
heaven.