

A HARMONY OF SO MANY NATIONS

Director: **Lars Ulrik Mortensen** Concertmaster: **Nicolas Mazzoleni**

Soprano: **Iwona Sobotka** First laureate of 2004 Queen Elisabeth Competition of Belgium

- JAN DISMAS ZELENKA Hipocondrie a7 concertanti in A
(*Lentement*) – *Allegro* – *Lentement*
- GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL Concerto Grosso Op 6 No 5 in D
(*Larghetto e staccato*) – *Allegro* – *Presto* –
Largo/Allegro – *Menuet: un poco larghetto*
- GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN Ouverture in B flat from *Tafelmusik III*
Ouverture – *Bergerie* – *Allegresse* – *Postillons*
– *Flaterie* – *Badinage* – *Menuet* – *Furioso*
- Interval
- MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER *Concert à 4 parties de violes H545*
Prelude 1 – *Prelude 2* – *Sarabande* – *Gigue*
angloise – *Gigue française* – *Passecaïlle*
- GEORG MUFFAT Sonata V in G from *Armonico Tributo*
Allemanda (Grave) – *Adagio* – *Fuga* –
Adagio – *Passacaglia (Grave)*

In the October–November tour, Charpentier and Handel pieces are replaced by Handel vocal music sung by Iwona Sobotka

- GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL Cantata *Ero e Leandro* HWV 150
Arias from
Giulio Cesare "Non disperar"
Ottone "Affanni del pensier"
Alcina "Tornami a vagheggiar"
"Ama, sospira"
Teseo "Moriro, ma vendicata"
Serse "Nè men con l'ombre d'infideltà"
"Un cenno leggiadretto, un riso vezzosetto"
"È gelosia quella tiranna"



JAN DISMAS ZELENKA (1679–1745)

Hipocondrie a7 concertanti in A

Outwardly, Jan Dismas Zelenka's career was unremarkable. Born in Bohemia and educated in Prague, he spent much of his working life as a court composer in Dresden, travelling little and shying away from the limelight. Inwardly, though, he imbued his music with rare personality. In an age when originality per se was not the main focus of artistic endeavour, Zelenka can hardly have been striving for individuality; rather, his sometimes idiosyncratic style was the natural expression of a distinctive artistic temperament. That's why he fascinates us today.

In the *Hipocondrie* – written in Prague in 1723 – Zelenka breathes new life into the well-worn French Overture, in which an arresting, rhythmic opening eventually bursts forth into a fast fugal movement. There's no straightforward explanation for the curious title. Maybe the piece was originally written as an overture to a stage-work of that name; perhaps it's a study in melancholy (the French translation of the title); or could it possibly be autobiographical? We don't know. But there is something decidedly neurotic about the last minute or two of the piece. The music prepares to end, then seems to change its mind time and again. Something else too: a number of short expressive motifs – the audible sighs of the hypochondriac?

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

Concerto Grosso Op 6 No 5 in D

Corelli's twelve concerti grossi Opus 6 were aptly described by the eighteenth-century writer Roger North as the 'bread of life'. In a very real sense they provided musical nourishment for generations of musicians right across Europe. The first genuine orchestral classics, they were even published in full score to facilitate closer study. No one studied them more carefully than Handel. And what he saw was the opportunity to cash in on their enormous popularity – with a sequel. In order not to miss the 25th anniversary of the publication of Corelli's Opus 6, Handel wrote his

28 July
West Road Concert Hall,
Cambridge
UK

29 July
St Margaret's Church
King's Lynn
UK

31 July
Pfarrkirche St Margareta
Brühl
Germany



own Opus 6 concertos at breakneck speed between the 29th of September and the 30th of October 1739. Their familiar, retro style suited the British public down to the ground, and they soon became as popular as their models. The fifth concerto is one of the few in the collection to rely quite heavily on borrowed material. Handel plundered the overture to his recently completed Ode for St Cecilia's Day for the first two movements (and the inspiration for the last), while the fifth movement suggests that he had been playing some harpsichord sonatas just been published by a promising young Italian called Domenico Scarlatti.

GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN (1681-1767)

Ouverture in B flat from Tafelmusik III

Telemann prided himself on the wide appeal of his music. 'A page with witchcraft in its lines, full of tricky passage-work', he wrote, 'is a burden to perform. He who composes for the many does better than he who writes for the few'. And Telemann did very well indeed. Pricing his *Tafelmusik* at an exorbitant 8 imperial thalers, it was no wonder that he was the most commercially successful composer in Germany. He designed the three parts of *Tafelmusik* to appeal to all tastes. Each consisted of an orchestral overture and suite ending with a lusty 'Conclusion'. But there was also a concerto, quartet, trio and solo sonata for more intimate music making. Each part, or 'production' as he called them, could thus form the basis of a complete evening's entertainment, or it could just be dipped into for individual items, as here. Even Handel enjoyed dipping into this collection. He later reworked the fugal theme of this B flat Overture in his Occasional Oratorio, and the Postillons surfaces again, thinly disguised, in Belshazzar.

MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER (1645-1704)

Concert à 4 parties de violes H545

Marc-Antoine Charpentier left a lamentably small legacy of secular instrumental music: less than a dozen pieces and only two of them really substantial – the Sonata à huit H548 and the Concert à quatre parties de violes. The Concert dates from 1680-1 and is intriguingly scored for a four-part orchestra of viols. We have no idea for whom it was written, but judging by the sophistication of the musical language the audience must have been a discerning one. The first Prelude seems nostalgic for the contrapuntal delights of French viol fantasies of decades past, while the second Prelude

is an Allemande in all but name. The Sarabande takes the form of a rondeau, with five carefully notated repetitions of the main theme interspersed with two brief episodes for string trio. The English – and French – style Gigue seem to have mischievously swapped identities: the Gigue angloise is full of the dotted rhythms typical of the French Gigue, while the Gigue française actually sports the thumping iambus beloved of the British Jig. If this is an in-joke, then the humour doesn't last long; the final Passecaille is a gloriously high-minded example of its species – it will linger long in the memory well after this concert is over.

GEORG MUFFAT (1653-1704)

Sonata V in G from Armonico Tributo

Georg Muffat would have felt perfectly at home in the European Union. Although he was of Scottish ancestry, was born in Savoy, and looked to Paris and Rome for his musical inspiration, he considered himself a German at heart. Not surprisingly, his musical style is richly cosmopolitan. Above all he strove to form a link between the two key composers of the late seventeenth century – Lully and Corelli – and introduce German speaking audiences to their multifarious charms. But he had bigger ideas than that. He hoped that through music he could help promote greater international understanding.

The sonatas of his *Armonico tributo* were issued after his return from Italy in 1682. Described as 'sonatas for few or numerous instruments', Muffat published them cleverly so that they were suitable for a wide range of different instrumental combinations. Ideally, though, they were designed to be played by a string orchestra enlivened by a trio of soloists. The constitution of the trio was optional, but 'if among your musicians you have some delicate oboes', he wrote, 'they would make an excellent trio with a bassoon'. The heart of the Fifth Sonata is its final movement, a long and magnificent Passacaglia – French in form and Italian in its concerto grosso texture, it represents the epitome of Muffat's cosmopolitan style.

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

Arias from the Operas

Today, programme note writers go to great lengths to explain that Handel's operatic greatness lay in his exploitation of the conventional outlines of contemporary opera, and, moreover, his



judicious subversion of its narrow conventions. Eighteenth-century audiences would have been mystified by this. They were impressed by Handel's lyrical gift, his ability to use it to characterize any emotional situation, and above all, his genius for tailoring every aria to showcase the singer for whom it was intended. Eighteenth-century opera lived or died by the ability of its superstar singers to attract and spellbind audiences. Most of all the public loved their sopranos.

Handel's major soprano roles were sung by Anna Maria Strada, an Italian singer who arrived in England in 1729 and sang in at least 24 operas under the composer's direction. The waspish eighteenth-century music historian Charles Burney tells us that she was brilliant in executing trills, but that *'her personal charms did not assist her much... or dispose the eye to augment the pleasures of the ear.'* When Strada left England in 1737 her place was soon taken by the French soprano Elizabeth Francesina. She took a starring role in *Serse* and was loved by the public for what Burney described as her *'lark-like execution'*. Our love affair with the soprano voice continues to this day.

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Cantata *Ero e Leandro* (1770) HWV150

Although this is a cantata sung by a single character throughout, "*Ero e Leandro*" belongs among Handel's dramatic cantatas written in Rome when the composer was just 22 years old, a similar age to our soprano soloist. The first performance probably took place at Cardinal Ottoboni's palace conducted by none other than the great Corelli. The libretto sets the tragic final moments of the story of Hero and Leander. Leander, who had bravely swum across the Hellespont each night to meet his lover the princess Hero, held against her will as one of Aphrodite's priestesses, is found by Hero drowned, out of jealousy for his happiness by the evil magic of the Moirae; his body washed up on the shore. The distraught and inconsolate Hero throws herself into the sea.

There are seven movements. The opening recitative recounts the young princess's ghastly discovery, and is followed by a dramatic and turbulent aria in which the soprano duets with a solo violin. A passionate rant against the cruel elements ensues, culminating in a longing for death. The second aria (*Se la morte...*) is marked by despair; the soprano accompanied by a *perpetuum mobile* solo cello. A recitative follows in which Hero casts her beautiful locks

into the sea, and in the third and final aria (*Si muora*) resigns herself to her inexorable death. The work closes, rather unusually, with a recitative, giving a feeling of incompleteness as if her death can never fully be consummated.

LARS ULRIK MORTENSEN Music Director, EUBO

Lars Ulrik Mortensen studied at The Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen (harpichord with Karen Englund, figured bass with Jesper Bøje Christensen) and with Trevor Pinnock in London. From 1988 to 1990 he was harpsichordist with London Baroque and until 1993 with Collegium Musicum 90 (leader Simon Standage). He now works extensively as conductor, soloist and chamber musician in Europe, the United States, Mexico, South America and Japan, performing regularly with distinguished

colleagues including Emma Kirkby, John Holloway and Jaap ter Linden. Lars Ulrik Mortensen received a number of prizes and distinctions, among them the Danish Music Critics' Award in 1984. Between 1996 and 1999 Lars Ulrik Mortensen was professor of harpsichord and performance practice at the Hochschule für



Musik in Munich, and he now teaches at numerous early music courses throughout the world. Until recently, Lars Ulrik Mortensen was also active as a conductor for "modern" orchestras in Sweden and Denmark, where especially his activities at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen met with great critical acclaim. In future, however, he will concentrate on work with period instrument ensembles. Since 1999, he has been artistic director of the Danish baroque orchestra Concerto Copenhagen (CoCo), and in 2004 he succeeded Roy Goodman as Music Director of the European Union Baroque Orchestra (EUBO). For the period 2004-05, his busy schedule with CoCo will include performances of Mozart's *Clemenza di Tito* and a revival of the

28 October
Kloster Michaelstein
Blankenburg
Germany

30 October
St Jan Kerk
Maastricht
The Netherlands

31 October
Waalse Kerk
Amsterdam
The Netherlands

3 November
De Oosterpoort
Groningen
The Netherlands

4 November
Jacobikerk
Utrecht
The Netherlands



internationally acclaimed production of Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, both at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. Lars Ulrik Mortensen has recorded extensively for numerous labels including DGG-Archive, EMI and Kontrapunkt, and his recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* was awarded the French *Diapason d'Or*. A series of Buxtehude-recordings from the 1990s for the Danish Dacapo-label has met with universal critical acclaim. The first complete recording of Buxtehude's chamber music with John Holloway and Jaap ter Linden received the Danish Grammy award for best classical recording of the year, another Grammy was awarded a CD with Buxtehude's cantatas with Emma Kirkby, and Lars Ulrik Mortensen became Danish Musician of the Year 2000 for his three CDs with harpsichord music by Buxtehude. These recordings also received the Cannes Classical Award 2001. Furthermore, a series of recordings with John Holloway and Aloysia Assenbaum of violin sonatas by Johann Heinrich Schmelzer and Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber are being released on the prestigious ECM label. Directing *Concerto Copenhagen*, Mortensen's most recent recording is Volume I of the complete harpsichord concertos by JS Bach on CPO, which has received lavish praise in the international press, and 2004 will see the release of recordings of Haydn piano concertos (with soloist Ronald Brautigam) on BIS as well as symphonies by Danish composers Hartmann, Kunzen and Gerson on CPO.

NICOLAS MAZZOLENI Concertmaster

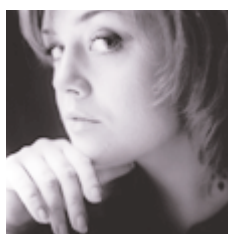
French violinist Nicolas Mazzoleni studied modern violin in Lyon. He graduated with first prize in 1991 with a special mention for baroque work. He became interested in the baroque violin during this time when he met Chiara Banchini, Marc Minkowski and Jesper Christensen. In 1989, he became a member of Les Musiciens du Louvre with Marc Minkowski and is now principal second violin or leader. Nicolas also works with Les Talens Lyriques (Christophe Rousset), l'Ensemble Vocal et Instrumental de Lausanne (Michel Corboz) and La Grande Ecurie et la Chambre du Roy (Jean-Claude Malgoire). In 2004, he has led the Luzern Opera



Orchestra in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme of Lully-Molière and the second violins in Les Boréades of Rameau at Zürich Opera House. Nicolas Mazzoleni has enjoyed a close relationship with the European Union Baroque Orchestra since 1995, leading for conductors Marc Minkowski, Bob Van Asperen, Paul Goodwin, Alfredo Bernardini, Lars Ulrik Mortensen and Roy Goodman. He has taught baroque violin at the Conservatoire de Paris and in Lyon, Toulouse, Montpellier and Grenoble. As a chamber musician Nicolas has worked with musicians such as Bob Van Asperen, Jean-Paul Fouchecourt, Martin Gester, Barthold Kuijken, Christophe Rousset and Anton Steck. From the violin, Nicolas Mazzoleni directs his own ensemble Collegium Baroque, which he founded in 1998, as well as Les Musiciens du Louvre .

IWONA SOBOTKA Soprano

First laureate of Queen Elisabeth Competition of Belgium 2004 Polish soprano Iwona Sobotka has recently won first prize at the prestigious competition in Belgium and as a consequence has been invited to tour with the European Union Baroque Orchestra. Born in 1981, she began her singing studies in her native town of Mława, and continued at the Chopin Academy in Warsaw. In 2003 she moved to the Escuela Superior de Musica Reina Sofia in Madrid, where she currently works with Tom Krause. During her studies she has taken part in masterclasses with Kerstin Wahlstrom Olsson, Denyce Graves, Barbara Ann Martin, Alberto Zedda and Sarah Walker and was the recipient of a special award from the Polish soprano Zdzisława Donat at a competition in Lodz. In her home country, Iwona has won many competitions and prizes including the Polish Song Competition in Warsaw in 2001, the International Competition Ada Sari in Nowy Sącz and at the Paderewski Competition in Bydgoszcz in 2003. Further afield, she has won prizes in Barcelona (International Singing Competition Francisco Viñas 2003) and at the 22nd International Belvedere Competition in Vienna. Her triumph at the 2003 "East & West Artists International Auditions" in New York City resulted in an invitation to make her recital debut at the Carnegie Hall in April 2005.



5 November
Broederenkerk
Deventer
The Netherlands

6 November
Academiezaal
Sint Truiden
Belgium

7 November
CD Recording (Handel)
Sint Truiden
Belgium

8 November
Bibliothèque Solvay
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Brussels, Belgium