

THE ARTISTS

Alexander Weimann
HARPSICHORD

Stephan MacLeod
BARITONE

French double-manual
harpsichord after Taskin

Pre-concert chat with
host Matthew White at 6:45:

Alexander Weimann



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ANY VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDING
DEVICE IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY AUGUST 3 AT 7:30 PM | CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

BACH'S ITALIAN CONCERTO

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750):

Overture in the French style BWV 831

Overture
Courante
Gavotte I / II
Passepied I / II
Sarabande
Bourrée I / II
Gigue
Echo

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759):

Cantata "Dalla guerra amorosa" HWV 102a

Recitativo: **Dalla guerra amorosa**
Aria: **Non v'alletti un occhio nero**
Recitativo: **Fuggite, sì fuggite**
Aria: **La bellezza è com' un fiore**
Recitativo / Finale: **Fuggite, sì fuggite**

INTERVAL

Johann Sebastian Bach:

Italian Concerto BWV 971

Allegro
Andante
Presto

Johann Sebastian Bach:

Cantata "Amore Traditore" BWV 203

Aria: **Amore traditore**
Recitativo: **Voglio provar**
Aria: **Chi in amore ha nemica la sorte**

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750):
Overture in the French style BWV 831

Overture
Courante
Gavotte I/II
Passepied I/II
Sarabande
Bourrée I/II
Gigue
Echo

G.F. Handel (1685-1759):
Cantata "Dalla guerra amorosa" HWV 102a

RECITATIVO

Dalla guerra amorosa,
or che ragion mi chiama,
O miei pensieri,
fuggite pur, fuggite.
Vergognosa non è
In amor fuga,
che sol fuggendo un'alma
del crudo amor può riportar la palma.

From the amorous war
now reason tells me,
O my thoughts,
flee now, flee.
Flight is not shameful
in matters of love,
for only in retreat from cruel love
can a soul return victorious.

ARIA

Non v'alletti un occhio nero
Né i suoi sguardi, lusinghiero,
che da voi chieda pietà.
Che per far le sue vendette,
e con arco e con saette,
ivi amor nascoso sta.

Do not be enticed by a dark eye
Nor its glances, alluring,
that ask mercy of you.
For to wreak his vengeance,
With both bow and arrow,
Love dwells hidden there.

RECITATIVO

Fuggite, si fuggite,
ahi! Di quanto veleno,
amore asperge i suoi piaceri.
Ah! quanto ministra
Duol e piante a chi lo segue,
e le sue leggi adora.

Flee, yes flee,
Oh! With how much poison
Love sprinkles his pleasures.
Ah! How much pain and weeping
He bestows on he who follows him,
And loves his rule.

Se un volto v'innamora,
sappiate o pensier miei,
che ciò che piace
in brev'ora svanisce,
e poi dispiace.

If a face infatuates you,
know O my thoughts,
that that which now pleases
in a little vanishes,
and then displeases.

ARIA

La bellezza è com' un fiore,
sul mattin vivace e bello,
sul mattin di primavera,
che la sera langue e more,
si scolora e non par quello.

Beauty is like a flower,
In the morning fresh and fine,
on a spring morning,
which by evening droops and dies,
fades and seems no more.

RECITATIVO / FINALE

Fuggite, sì fuggite!
A chi servo d'amor,
vive in catena,
è dubbioso il gioir,
certa la pena.

Flee, yes flee!
To him who is
a servant of love,
living enchained,
joy is uncertain.

INTERVAL

Johann Sebastian Bach:
Italian Concerto BWV 971

Allegro
Andante
Presto

Johann Sebastian Bach:
Cantata "Amore Traditore" BWV 203

ARIA

Amore traditore,
Tu non m'inganni più.
Non voglio più catene,
Non voglio affanni, pene,
Cordoglio e servitù.

Traitorous love,
you will deceive me no more .
I desire chains no more,
I don't want suffering, pains,
heartache or servitude.

RECITATIVO

Voglio provar,
Se posso sanar
L'anima mia dalla piaga fatale,
E viver si può senza il tuo strale;
Non sia più la speranza
Lusinga del dolore,
E la gioja nel mio core,
Più tuo scherzo sarà nella mia costanza.

I want to try and see
if I can heal
my soul of this fatal would,
and if it can live without your arrow;
then no more will hope
dazzle with sorrow
and joy my heart,
your games will have no place within my constancy.

ARIA

Chi in amore ha nemica la sorte,
È follia, se non lascia d'amar.
Sprezzi l'alma le crude ritorte,
Se non trova mercede al penar.

Whoever has fate as his enemy in love
is a fool if he does not give up loving.
May the soul fracture its cruel bonds
if it cannot find mercy for its suffering.

BACH'S ITALIAN CONCERTO

Johann Sebastian Bach published his *Clavier-Übung II* in 1735 consisting of two solo works for two-manual harpsichord – the *Italian Concerto* (Concerto nach Italienischen Gusto / Concerto after the Italian taste) and the *French Overture* (Ouverture nach französischer Art / Overture in the French style).

Clavier-Übung can be translated as “keyboard practice”. Bach published four volumes:

- i: Six Partitas, published separately (sold in one volume in 1731)
- ii: *Italian Concerto* and *French Overture* (1735)
- iii: Sometimes called the German Organ Mass (1739)
- iv: Aria with diverse variations – *Goldberg Variations* (1741)

Far from purely pedagogical exercises, the works in these four collections are, like the *Art of the Fugue* and the *Musical Offering*, demonstrations of Bach's total mastery and knowledge of the technical and stylistic musical conventions present in Europe in the first half of the 18th century.

French Overture

The title of the suite comes from the convention of starting French orchestral dance suites with an *Overture*. This movement replaces the *Allemande* that begins Bach's other keyboard suites. With eleven movements, it is the longest keyboard suite Bach ever composed, wherein he includes optional dance movements both before and after the *Sarabande*. The inclusion of an extra movement after the *Gigue* as well, entitled “the echo”, is meant to exploit the loud and soft dynamics possible on a two-manual harpsichord. The dynamic indications (piano and forte) found throughout the work indicate where to switch manuals, providing child-like fun to harpsichordists in responding to the technical challenges of switching manuals at high speed. The similarity between this final movement to the beginning of the *Italian Concerto* connect the two compositions of *Clavierübung II*.

Bach had originally conceived *Clavierübung I* of consisting of seven partitas, the 7th being an early version of the *French Overture* with fewer ornaments and in C minor. When it came to the publication of *Clavierübung I*, however, he chose only 6 of the partitas and decided to release the missing 7th suite transposed and elaborated upon as one of the two major pieces in *Clavierübung II*. Here it is featured alongside another significant example of an orchestral piece transformed by Bach into a solo keyboard work – *The Italian Concerto*.

Cantata Dalla guerra amorosa HWV 102a

The manuscript for this cantata dates from 1709 and was a copy made for the musical establishment of Marchese Francesco Ruspoli, one of several important patrons who supported Handel while he was living and working in Italy. Likely written for Ruspoli's weekly musical gatherings, this

secular cantata is reminiscent in theme to Handel's *Trionfo del Tempo* (1707) and his *Apollo e Dafne* (1709), which also include exquisitely realized musings on the fading nature of physical beauty and the dangers inherent in love. Handel was beloved by the Italians and was referred to as “Il Caro Sassone” (The Dear Saxon) by his patron and the Italian public alike. His total immersion and love for Italian musical culture, and opera in particular, remained at the heart of his personal style for the rest of his life.

Italian Concerto

Throughout his life Bach took an interest in the concerto form, developed in Italy. The *Italian Concerto* demonstrates his masterful assimilation of the latest musical fashions into a language uniquely his own. One of Bach's sternest critics, the composer and writer Johann Adolph Scheibe, was forced to admit: “This keyboard concerto is to be regarded as a perfect model of a well-designed solo concerto.” In composing a solo concerto in Italian style for the two-manual keyboard, Bach brilliantly manages to recreate in miniature the Italian “Concerto Grosso” or “contest effect” between a full instrumental ensemble and a soloist. The two manuals allow him to delineate clearly the solo line on one manual and the orchestral textures on the other.

Cantata Amore Traditore BWV 203

Unlike Handel, who spent several years in Italy fully embracing its rich musical culture, J.S. Bach never made an Italian pilgrimage. He was nonetheless heavily influenced and impressed by the Italian musical style of the period. Through studying scores, he knew and adapted the music of, among others, Arcangelo Corelli, Tomaso Albinoni, Claudio Monteverdi, Antonio Vivaldi and Benedetto Marcello.

This secular cantata, also on the theme of treacherous love, dates from Bach's time in Weimar (1718-1723). It is modeled on the Italian solo cantata tradition for voice and continuo, and its first performance and librettist are both unknown. That he only wrote two works using Italian text and no opera at all, demonstrates that though he was perfectly capable of writing convincingly in this style and in the Italian language as well, his heart and mind were somewhere else. The complex keyboard part in the final aria suggests it might have been written as an opportunity for the master to demonstrate his own extravagant keyboard skills.

– Matthew White