

THE ARTISTS

Stephan MacLeod
BASS

Veronika Skuplik
VIOLIN

Matthew Jennejohn
CORNETTO

Romina Lischka
VIOLA DA GAMBA

Francis Jacob
ORGAN

Lucas Harris
LUTE

Cappella Borealis:

Jeremy Berkman

Alex Fisher

Ellen Marple

Nathan Wilkes

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Pre-concert chat with
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Alex Fisher



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DE PROFUNDIS:
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Giovanni Picchi (c.1571-1643):

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La Ioannina

Andreas Hammerschmidt (1611-1675):

Gott sey mir gnädig

Heinrich I. F. von Biber (1644-1704):

Nisi Dominus

Johann Rudolf Ahle (1625-1673):

Herr, nun lässt du deinen Diener

PROGRAMME NOTES

BY ALEX FISHER

400 years ago, religious war broke out on the European continent. The uneasy settlement reached in the mid-sixteenth century by the Holy Roman Empire's Catholics and Protestants failed to hold, and a foul mixture of political intrigue and religious resentment led to thirty years of horror in the German theatre. In this anniversary year it seems appropriate to explore a variety of music that expresses themes of lamentation, penitence, and the depths of faith in an unsettled age, drawing especially on sacred music from this region.

Tonight's programme highlights a small but deeply felt repertory of seventeenth-century music scored for solo bass voice, sackbuts, cornetto, and violin. By this time the bass voice was often coded as authoritative, kingly, and even godly (the *vox Domini* or "voice of the Lord"), and it seems no accident that the 150 Psalms of King David were seen as ideal vehicles for the bass to express emotions of supplication, lamentation, and thanksgiving. Combined with sackbuts, the bass has a powerful effect. The sackbut, ancestor to the modern trombone, had a variety of functions since its invention in the late fifteenth century, but by this time was closely associated with church music, normally playing together with choirs in some of the more sumptuous church ensembles of the period in cities like Munich and Venice. Later, trombones would retain their association with religious profundity: one thinks of the great Mass settings of Haydn and Mozart (recall "Tuba mirum" from Mozart's *Requiem*), or the sublime final movements of Beethoven's 5th and 9th Symphonies. In the early seventeenth century, the sackbut was considered by the theorist and composer Michael Praetorius to be an enormously flexible instrument, capable of making fine adjustments to pitch that were much more difficult on instruments with finger holes. They continued to be featured prominently with voices in the church music of that century, but some composers, such as Heinrich Schütz, explored the instrument's capacity as a solo and obbligato instrument. In the Renaissance sackbuts were often joined in the upper register by cornetti, curved wooden instruments with brass-style mouthpieces; in the Baroque era the cornetto was gradually supplanted by the violin as the primary melody instrument. Tonight we have the opportunity to explore the sounds of these two instruments singly and in dialogue with one another and the full ensemble.

Our concert begins, appropriately, with a proclamation: *Attendite, popule meus* (Ps. 78:1-3) is King David's appeal to his people to attend to God's goodness and to repent their sins. *Attendite* is one of two famous sacred concertos drawn from Heinrich Schütz's first book of *Symphoniæ sacræ* (1629), written in the wake of his recent trip to Venice, where he likely heard all manner of splendid church music for small ensembles (did he meet Monteverdi? Sadly, we do not know). Typically for this collection, Schütz alternates passages for the solo voice with purely instrumental

"sinfonias", bringing the entire ensemble together at various points within the piece and in the grand conclusion. While in Venice Schütz possibly met or heard the music of Giovanni Picchi, whose fifteenth sonata for six instruments shows off the different instrumental colours on offer tonight. We then return to penitential themes: Martin Luther's translation of Psalm 130, *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu Dir* ("From deepest need I cry unto You"), was perhaps the most profound expression of penitence for early modern Germans. An early and famous chorale, it features a striking opening that descends by the interval of a fifth. 16th-century settings by Johann Walter (Luther's musical protégé), Lupus Hellinck, and Balthasar Resinarius explore this profound melody in different instrumental and vocal combinations. We follow this immediately with a setting of the original Latin Psalm, *De profundis*, by Sisto Reina, a northern Italian Minorite monk and composer who published several collections of vocal and instrumental church music for smaller ensembles. The spirit of lamentation is expressed clearly in the opening by the languid chromatic descents of the violin and cornetto. The first half of our programme concludes with perhaps the best-known work for sackbut quartet and solo bass, Schütz's *Fili mi, Absalon*, also from his first book of *Symphoniæ sacræ*. The brief text records King David's lament on the death of his third son, Absalom, who had rebelled and raised an army against him. Despite this treachery, David's wails for his son and wishes he could have died in his place. In Schütz's setting the four sackbuts provide sinfonias at the opening and mid-point of the piece, anticipating and echoing the wailing motives of the bass. With the sackbuts joining together with the voice, Schütz offers a conclusion of special intensity and gravity.

The second half of our programme continues the theme of supplication, enlivened by the rich colours of early seventeenth-century instrumental music. We begin with a short but splendid canzona for four trombones by Biagio Marini, a talented violinist who likely worked with Monteverdi in Venice but spent considerable time in Germany at the Wittelsbach courts in Neuburg an der Donau and Düsseldorf during the 1620s. A counterpoint to this work for violin and cornetto alone will be heard in *La Ioannina* by Giovanni Martino Cesare, a native of Udine who performed for the Munich court. Four more settings from King David's Psalter form the core of this half of the

programme. Tarquinio Merula, who shuttled back and forth between Bergamo and Cremona, set many Psalms for small ensembles: his *Credidi, propter locutus sum* (Ps. 115) continues the theme of penitent supplication answered by God's grace, the bass's prayer interweaving with cascading runs by the violin and cornetto. The sackbuts return for Thomas Selle's *Domine exaudi* (Ps. 101), underlining the bass's cry to God ("O Lord, hear my prayer") with a powerful, chordal opening; the narrator's plea to God to speedily hear his prayer ("velociter exaudi me") excites the instruments into quicker passagework. The setting of *Nisi Dominus* (Ps. 126) by Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber, composer for the Catholic Archbishop of Salzburg, is perhaps the most unusual and striking of the works on tonight's programme, joining a violin part of the highest virtuosity to the proclamations of the solo bass. The violinist's double-, triple-, and quadruple-stopping, quick flourishes, and athletic arpeggiations make for an arresting contrast with the other Psalm settings

on tonight's programme. Framing the Biber Psalm are two settings of texts in the German language by Andreas Hammerschmidt and Johann Rudolf Ahle. Hammerschmidt's *Gott sei mir gnädig*, following Luther's translation of Psalm 51 ("Have mercy on me, O God") features an unusual scoring for bass in constant dialogue with just two trombones. Our programme ends with the German-Lutheran translation of the Cantic of Simeon (*Nunc dimittis* in Latin), which concluded the evening Office of Compline in the traditional liturgy. In the Gospel of Luke, we hear of an aged, devout Jew, Simeon, whom the Holy Spirit promised to spare from death until he had seen the Messiah. Having seen the child, Simeon breaks out into song ("Lord, now let Thy servant depart in peace"). In Ahle's setting of the Cantic, *Herr, nun lässt du deinen Diener*, Simeon's opening exclamations (*Herr! Herr!*) are anticipated by rising figures in the trombones, and his joy at seeing the Lord moves Ahle to switch to a dancelike triple metre, a joyous and spirited ending to our programme.

THE MUSICIANS



Stephan MacLeod bass

Born in Geneva, Stephan MacLeod first played the violin and the piano and then studied singing with Kurt Moll in Cologne and with Gary Magby in Lausanne. Active all over the world as a renowned concert singer since his early twenties, his desire to conduct led him to establish his own ensemble, Gli Angeli Genève, in 2005. The ensemble has since become one of the most respected European ensembles specializing in period performance. In recent years, he has been invited to conduct a production of Cavalli's *La Calisto* in Geneva, Mozart concerts at the Lausanne Opera, a production of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* in Geneva, Bach Motets with the Netherlands Bach Society, Bach's Matthew Passion in Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands, and orchestral works by Bach and Rameau with the *Orchestre de la Suisse Romande*.

As a soloist, Stephan is particularly active in the oratorio repertoire, particularly under Philippe Herreweghe, Gustav Leonhardt(†), Franz Brüggen(†), Masaaki Suzuki (Bach Collegium Japan), Jordi Savall, Philippe Pierlot (Ricerca Consort), Michel Corboz, Daniel Harding, Václav Luks, Sigiswald Kuijken, Konrad Junghänel (Cantus Cölln), Christophe Coin, Helmut Rilling, Frieder Bernius, Jos Van Immerseel, Jésus López Cobos, Hervé Niquet, Paul Van Nevel (Huelgas Ensemble), and with such ensembles as the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Musica Antiqua Köln, the Freiburger Barockorchester, Tafelmusik, and the RIAS-Kammerchor. In the opera world, he has sung in several productions in Brussels (La Monnaie), Venice (La Fenice), Cologne, Bilbao, Edinburgh, and Geneva.

Stephan currently holds a professorship in singing at the Haute Ecole de Musique of Lausanne and is about to embark on a new concert series with Gli Angeli featuring performances of the complete Haydn Symphonies.

Cappella Borealis

Cappella Borealis was founded in 2015 as Vancouver's own ensemble for early brass music. Consisting of Jeremy Berkman, Alex Fisher, Ellen Marple, and Nathan Wilkes, all performers of the early trombone (sackbut), Cappella Borealis explores a range of repertoire from the Renaissance and Baroque periods featuring early brass, often in combination with voices and other instruments. The ensemble has appeared with *musica intima* and in the Vancouver Bach Festival presented by Early Music Vancouver.

DE PROFUNDIS:

17TH-CENTURY SACRED MUSIC FOR SOLO BASS

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672):

Attendite, popule meus

Attendite, popule meus, legem meam:
incline aurem vestram in verba oris mei.

Aperiam in parabolis os meum;
loquar propositiones ab initio.

Quanta audivimus, et cognovimus ea,
et patres nostri narraverunt nobis.

Give ear, o my people, to my teaching:
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings from of old.

Things that we have heard and known,
that our ancestors have told us.

— Psalm 78:1–3

Giovanni Picchi (c.1571–1643):

Sonata XV

from *Canzoni da sonar con ogni sorte d'istromenti* (1625)

– edited by Nathan Wilkes

Johann Walter (1496–1570),

Lupus Hellinck (c.1494–1541),

Balthasar Resinarius (c.1485–1544):

Three settings of Martin Luther, *Aus tiefer Not*

(adapted from Psalm 130, *De profundis*)

Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir,
Herr Gott, erhöre mein Rufen.
Dein gnädig Ohren kehr zu mir,
Und meiner Bitt sie öffnen.
Denn du so wilt das sehen an,
Was Sünd und Unrecht ist getan,
Wer kann, Herr, für dir bleiben?

Out of the depths I cry to you,
Lord God, hear my call.
Turn your merciful ears to me,
and open them to my supplication.
For if you shall see
what sin and injustice have been done,
Lord, who can stand before you?

— Versification of Psalm 130:1–3 (*De profundis*)

Sisto Reina (d.after 1664):

De profundis

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine;
Domine, exaudi vocem meam.
Fiant aures tuæ intendentes
in vocem deprecationis meæ.
Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine,
Domine, quis sustinebit?
Quia apud te propitiatio est;
et propter legem tuam sustinui te, Domine.
Sustinuit anima mea in verbo eius;
speravit anima mea in Domino.
A custodia matutina usque ad noctem,
speret Israel in Domino.
Quia apud Dominum misericordia,
et copiosa apud eum redemptio.
Et ipse redimet Israel
ex omnibus iniquitatibus eius.
Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui Sancto,
Sicut erat in Principio
et nunc et semper,
et in sæcula sæculorum, Amen.

Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;
Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications.
If you, O Lord, shall mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with you,
and by your law I have sustained you, Lord.
My soul is succoured in his word;
my soul has trusted in the Lord.
From the morning watch to the night,
Israel shall hope in the Lord.
For there is mercy with the Lord,
and bounty in his redemption.
And he shall redeem Israel
from all of its sins.
Glory be to God the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be,
world without end, Amen.

— Psalm 130

Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672):

Fili mi, Absalon

Fili mi, Absalon.
Absalon, fili mi.
Quis mihi tribuat,
ut ego moriar pro te!
Absalon, fili mi, Absalon!

My son, Absalon.
Absalon, my son.
Would that I could
die in your place!
Absalon, my son, Absalon!

— Samuel 18:33

INTERVAL

Biagio Marini (1594–1663):

Canzon terza à 4

Tarquinio Merula (c. 1595–1665):

Credidi, propter locutus sum

Credidi, propter quod locutus sum:
ego autem humiliatus sum nimis.
Ego dixi in excessu meo:
Omnis homo mendax.
Quid retribuam Domino,
pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?
Calicem salutaris accipiam:
et nomen Domini invocabo.
Vota mea Domino reddam coram omni populo ejus:
pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus.
O Domine quia ego servus tuus:
ego servus tuus, et filius ancillæ tuæ.
Dirupisti vincula mea:
tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis,
et nomen Domini invocabo.
Vota mea Domino reddam
in conspectu omnis populi ejus:
in atriis domus Domini,
in medio tui, Jerusalem.
Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui Sancto,
Sicut erat in Principio
et nunc et semper,
et in sæcula sæculorum, Amen.

I believed, and therefore will speak,
but I was sore troubled:
I said in my haste,
All men are liars.
What reward shall I give unto the Lord:
for all the benefits that he hath done to me?
I will receive the cup of salvation:
and call on the Name of Lord.
I will pay my vows now in the presence of all his people.
Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.
Behold, O Lord, how that I am thy servant:
I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.
Thou hast broken my bonds asunder.
I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving:
and will call upon the Name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows unto the Lord,
in the sight of all his people:
in the courts of the Lord's house,
even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.
Glory be to God the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be,
world without end, Amen.

— Psalm 115

Thomas Selle (1599–1663):

Domine exaudi

Domine, exaudi orationem meam:
et clamor meus ad te veniat.
Non abscondas faciem tuam a me:
in quacumque die tribulor,
inclina ad me aurem tuam.
In quacumque die invocavero te,
velociter exaudi me.

O Lord, hear my prayer:
and let my cry go out to you.
Turn not your face from me,
in the days of my troubles,
turn your ear to me.
In the day I shall call upon you,
hear me swiftly.

— Psalm 101:1–3

Giovanni Martino Cesare (c.1590–1667):

La loannina

Andreas Hammerschmidt (1611–1675):

Gott sey mir gnädig

Gott sei mir gnädig nach Deiner Güte
und tilge meine Sünde
nach Deiner grossen Barmherzigkeit.
Wasche mich rein von meiner Missethat
und reinige mich von meiner Sünde.
Denn ich erkenne meine Missethat,
und meine Sünde ist immer vor mir.
An Dir allein hab ich gesündigt
und übel vor Dir gethan.
Gott sei mir gnädig nach Deiner Güte.

God, be merciful to me according to your goodness,
and take away my sins
according to your great mercy.
Wash me clean of my misdeeds
and cleanse me of my sin.
For I acknowledge my misdeeds,
and my sin is always before me.
I have sinned against you alone
and done evil before you.
God, be merciful to me according to your goodness.

— Versification of Psalm 51:1–6 (*Miserere mei Deus*)

Heinrich I. F. von Biber (1644–1704):

Nisi Dominus

Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum,
in vanum laboraverunt qui ædificant eam.
Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem,
frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.
Vanum est nobis ante lucem surgere:
surgite, postquam sederitis,
qui manducatis panem doloris.
Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum:
ecce hæreditas Domini filii:
merces fructus ventris.
Sicut sagittæ in manu potentis:
ita filii excussorum.
Beatus vir qui implevit desiderium suum ex ipsis:
non confundentur cum loquetur
inimicis suis in porta.
Gloria Patri, gloria Filio,
gloria et Spiritui sancto.
Sicut erat in principio et nunc
et semper et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Except the Lord build the house,
their labour is but lost that build it.
Except the Lord keep the city,
the watchman waketh but in vain.
It is but lost labour that ye haste to rise up early,
and so late take rest,
and eat the bread of carefulness,
for so he giveth his beloved sleep.
Lo children and the fruit of the womb
are a heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord.
Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant,
even so are the young children.
Happy is he that hath his quiver full of them:
they shall not be ashamed,
when they speak with their enemies at the gate.
Glory be to God the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

— Psalm 126

Johann Rudolf Ahle (1625–1673):

Herr, nun lässt du deinen Diener

Herr, nun lässt du Deinen Diener
in Friede fahren, wie Du gesaget hast.
Denn meine Augen haben Deinen Heiland gesehen,
welchen Du bereitet hast für allen Völkern,
ein Licht zu erleuchten die Heiden,
und zum Preis Deines Volkes Israel.

Lord, now let thy servant
depart in peace, as You have said.
For my eyes have seen Your Saviour,
whom You have prepared for all nations,
a light to illuminate the Gentiles,
and a glory for Your people Israel.

— Canticle of Simeon, Luke 1:29–31

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