HANDEL IN ITALY: VIRTUOSIC CANTATAS

Jenny Högström

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CELLO

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LUTE

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725):

Toccata & Fuga in A minor

Bernardo Pasquini (1637-1710):

Agostino Steffani (1654-1728):

Begl'occhi, oh Dio, non più

Sonata VII in F major

Chamber Duet (1699)

George Frederic Handel (1685-1759):

Nel dolce tempo HWV 135b

Italian Cantata for Alto (London, after 1710)

INTERVAL

Bernardo Pasquini:

Sonata IX in C minor

George Frederic Handel:

La Lucretia HWV 145

Solo Cantata for Soprano (Florence or Venice, 1706?, copied for Marquis Ruspoli on 31 August 1709

Salvatore Lanzetti (1710-1780):

Cello Sonata in C major Op. 2 No. 3

(Published 1750)

George Frederic Handel:

Tanti Strali HWV 197

Chamber Duet (1710-11)

French double-manual harpsichord after Taskin

Supported by

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

Jenny Högström & Terry Wey







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HANDEL IN ITALY:

VIRTUOSIC CANTATAS

Between late 1706 and early 1710, G.F. Handel spent over three years in Italy absorbing Italian art and culture, putting him in close daily contact with some of the most virtuosic performers, composers and artists living and working there at the time. We know that, among others, he would have come in contact with Lotti, Caldara, Corelli, Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti. Much of what he composed during this period was vocal chamber music for performance at the private concerts of one his most generous patrons, the Roman Marchese Ruspoli. This programme is a sampling of some of this vocal music paired with contemporary Italian instrumental music.

Bernardo Pasquini: Two Duets

Pasquini (1637-1710) was an Italian keyboard virtuoso, teacher and composer of operas, oratorios, cantatas and keyboard music. In 1706, together with Arcangelo Corelli and Alessandro Scarlatti, Pasquini became a member of the "Academy of Arcadia". The two short Pasquini duets on tonight's programme are directly related to the "partimento" tradition of learning composition and improvisation at the keyboard. Partimenti were "potential musical works" - bass lines that implied certain voice leading, melodies, and imitation. Students were expected to practice realizing these implications as they improvised over the given bass lines. Though it isn't hard to imagine teacher and student playing these sonatas together as pedagogical exercises, they are also very satisfying to listen to, and work particularly well for harpsichord and lute. Handel also wrote partimento-type continuo exercises, known as "Exercises for Queen Anne" for the daughter of George II who studied composition with him in England.

Agostino Steffani: Begl'occhi oh Dio, non piu

This chamber duet for soprano and alto, was written in 1699 by Agostino Steffani (1650-1723), a master of vocal chamber music, secular cantatas and opera, whose work was studied and admired by the young Handel. This Italian composer spent most of his professional career in Germany, first in Munich then at the court of Hanover. These works for two voices and basso continuo, of which there are approximately one hundred, were written probably between the years 1689 and 1716. It is said that Handel got his hands on a collection of Steffani's chamber duets in 1710 and that he carefully modeled his own chamber duets directly on them, even admitting that, while he could match their beauty, he could not surpass them. Handel's chamber duet Tanti Strali from 1710-11, for example, shows Steffani's influence and demonstrates a whole range of Handel's writing from the virtuosic first movement, through the languid second movement to the final fugal movement, which experienced Handelians will recognise from his much later oratorio Solomon. Both of these duets follow the duetti da camera style in which there are no recitatives and both voices sing the same text. While lacking in dramatic narrative content, they are an opportunity to weave great melody and counterpoint. Historian Paul H. Lang even suggests that J.S. Bach himself took the Steffani compositions as patterns for his cantata duets, as well as for the duets in the B minor mass.

Alessandro Scarlatti: Toccata & Fuga in A minor

When Handel arrived in Italy, Alessandro Scarlatti was one of the most successful and respected composers working there at that time. Though he was primarily a composer of opera (he wrote over 100), he also wrote upwards of five hundred chamber cantatas for solo voice that doubtless would have been an influence on the young Handel. Given the fact that Scarlatti also wrote some 35 oratorios and at least 200 masses, his production for keyboard instruments is somewhat modest in terms of quantity. The opening bars of this short work for keyboard only contain a series of bass notes and figures as well as the term arpeggio. In connection to this term, two contemporaries of Scarlatti come to mind: Geminiani for the violin and Gasparini for the basso continuo. Both practiced the acciaccatura, the short embellishing note that smuggles a well-dosed, so-called harmonious dissonance into the chord. Alessandro equally liked to use this technique as did his virtuosic son Domenico, inspired by the techniques of the guitarra spagnuola.

G.F. Handel: Nel Dolce del tempo HWV 135b

This cantata for alto soloist and continuo was likely written by Handel in 1708 during a short visit to Naples. It is a typical Italian continuo cantata in its charming setting of a simple story telling of the virtuous love between a shepherd and a shepherdess who likely represent two aristocrats soon to be or recently married. This is one of a very few cantatas by Handel to include two different characters depicted by the same singer.

Salvatore Lanzetti: Cello sonata in C major Op. 2 No. 3

Salvatore Lanzetti (1710-1780) was a gifted cellist and composer who worked in service to the court chapel in Lucca and for Vittorio Amedeo II in Turin. Before Boccherini, Lanzetti began to establish the cello as a solo instrument and was an important figure in the development of the cello sonata as a form. He was in London in the 1730s and may have lived there until 1754 which may have brought him into contact with Handel.

G.F. Handel: La Lucrezia HWV 145

This solo cantata for soprano and continuo was composed in Florence or Venice around 1706 and was copied for Marchese Ruspoli's collection during August 1709. One of Handel's most often performed chamber works, with a libretto written by Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili, it is a masterpiece of the genre and can be considered a sort of opera "scena" requiring a great singing actress. Depicting the inner turmoil faced by Lucrezia after her rape, and leading up to her suicide, it is a series of recitatives and arias beseeching the gods to take vengeance on Sextus Tarquinius, the son of the last king of Rome who robbed her of her virtue.

- Matthew White

Bernardo Pasquini (1637-1710):

Sonata VII in F major

instrumental

Agostino Steffani: Begl'occhi, oh Dio, non più

— chamber duet —

ARIA

Begl'occhi, oh Dio, non più, Più non piangete, oh Dio, Che per barbaro rigor Del tiranno Dio d'Amor Serve d'esca quell'acqua al foco mio.

ARIA

Clori mia, s'il cor t'ingombra Qualche dubbio di mia fe', Tal pensier sgombra da te. My Chloris, if your heart is burdened With some doubt as to my fidelity Put such thoughts behind you.

Those tears serve only to fuel my fire.

Beautiful eyes, O God, no more,

Of the tyrannical God of Love,

Weep no more, O God

For by barbarous decree

Per te, mia vita, moro;
Per te, mio ben, languisco.
Ma perché tu non miri
Quanto t'adoro, quanto?
Cieca ti rende il pianto,
Onde se, perché l'ami,
Col lagrimar tormenti un cor fedele,
La tua troppo pietà ti fa crudele.

RECITATIVO

For you my life, I die;
For you my love, I pine
But why do you not see
How much, how much I love you?
You are blinded by your tears
So that if, because you love a faithful heart,
You torment it with your weeping,
Your excessive pity makes you cruel.

Se la tua gelosia È parte del tuo amor, o bella Clori, Che fia dunque, che fia? Quando de' miei dolori Dovrò sperare il fin? Mentre conviene Che, perché troppo m'ami, io viva in pene.

RECITATIVO

If you jealousy
Is part of your love, O beautiful Chloris,
What then will happen?
How long must I wait
For an end to my suffering?
Meanwhile
Since you love me too much, I must live in pain.

ARIA

My Chloris, pray, stop for a while Stop the flow of those two streams That you endlessly shed from your eyes Otherwise, o horrid fate, In a sea of bitter tears You will drown my heart.

Please turn page quietly, and only after the music has ended.

Clori mia, deh, ferma alquanto, Ferma il corso a quei due fiumi Che dai lumi versi ogn'or, Altrimente, o sorte ria In un mar d'amaro pianto Vuoi sommerger il mio cor.

Alessandro Scarlatti: Toccata & Fuga in A minor

harpsichord solo

George Frideric Handel: Nel dolce tempo нwv 135b

Italian cantata for alto voice —

RECITATIVO

Nel dolce tempo in cui ritorna a noi, di novello colore adorna e piena, la bella età fiorita, che u'dibetto d'amor ne chim e invita, leggiadra Ninfa e vaga d'un ruscelletto in riva, là dove in alto piu l'erba copriva, vidi da lungi starai, e di rose e viole il petto ornarsi.

Onde ratto ivi giunto, o Dio! mirai.

Due lumi, un labbro, un seno, un crin si vago, che n'arsi a un tratto e del mio ardo son pago.

Quindi volto a colei ch'ho sempre al core dissi cosi, pietà chiedendo e amore.

In the sweet time, when the lovely season of flowers Returns to us, adorned and filled with new colour Calling and inviting us to love's delights,
On the bank of a stream,
There where a tall pine-tree shades the grass,
I saw a graceful and charming nymph,
Standing there a while,
Roses and violets adorning her breast.
Swiftly approaching her, oh gods! I saw
Two eyes, lips a bosom, such lovely tressed,
That immediately I was on fire, and pleased with my passion.

Then turning to her who is always in my heart, I spoke thus, asking for compassion and love.

ARIA

Shepherdess, with your fair eyes
Even the grass and the flowers are in in love,
Shepherdess of my heart
And these breezes, and these streams
Whispering and murmuring
Speak only of love for you.

erbe e fiori anch'innamori, pastorella del mio cor. E quest'aure, e questi fiumi,

sussurando, mormorando, per te sol parlan d'amor.

Pastorella, i bei lumi,

RECITATIVO

Di pallido color la ninfa intanto copri il bel viso, ed ostro poscia il tinse, qual chi, temendo e vergognando, suole mostrare in volto or rose ed or viole. Pur aorridendo alfine onestamente, a me rivolta disse:
Pastor, tua nobil alma, tuo coatume gentil, tuo vago viso, dolce fiamma d'amor destano ai core, ma dell'amore è l'onestà maggiore!
Ond'io risposi allora:
Piacemi, bella, il tuo leggiadro aspetto, ma piu dell'alma ancor la virtu rara, onesta t'amo piu, piu mi sei cara.

Meanwhile the nymphs' fair face was covered With paleness, then crimson shaded it, Like the one who, timid and shy, is accustomed To display in her face now roses, now violets. Then at last smiling openly, Turning to me she said: "Shepherd, your noble soul, your gentle manner, your charming face, awaken the sweet fire of love in my heart, but honour is greater than love!" So I then replied: "Fair lady, your graceful appearance delights me.

"Fair lady, your graceful appearance delights me, but even more than the rare virtue of your soul, the more I love you for your honour, the more dear you are to me".

ARIA

Senti, dite, ben mio, cantar, dal bosco rio, l'augelli ancora. In questa piaggia e in quella, lodar dite, mia bella, i lumi, i labbri, il cor l'onesto e fido amor, s'ascolta ognora.

Listen, my beloved, even the birds
From the woods to the streams
Sing of you.
On this shore and on that,
Praise of you, my fair one,
Of your eyes, your lips, your heart,
Your sincere and faithful love,
Is always to be heard.

INTERVAL

Bernardo Pasquini: Sonata IX in C minor

— instrumental —

George Frideric Handel: La Lucretia HWV 145

Solo cantata for soprano —

O eternal gods, O stars,
you who strike down wicked tyrants,
take up at my bidding your terrible darts!
With your thundering flames,
reduce to ashes the evil Tarquin and Rome itself!
From his proud brow
may the trembling laurel fall!
May the earth open an abyss at his feet
and, making of him an example none will forget,
hide the impious miscreant in its bowels!

ARIA

Already exulting in my suffering, the betrayer of my honour, wicked and faithless, takes his leave.

Oh, punish the arrogant deceit of this traitor, this evil monster, just heaven, O deadly Fate!

Translation (by Ellen T. Harris):

Please turn page quietly, and only after the music has ended.

RECITATIVO

O numi eterni, o stelle, che fulminate empii tiranni, impugnate a' miei voti orridi strali! Voi con fochi tonanti incenerite il reo Tarquinio e Roma! Dalla superba chioma omai trabocchi il vacillante alloro! S'apra il suolo in voragini: si celi, con memorando esempio, nelle viscere sue l'indegno e l'empio!

Già superbo del mio affanno, traditor dell'onor mio, parte l'empio, lo sleal.

Tu punisci il fiero inganno del fellon, del mostro rio, giusto ciel, Parca fatal!

earlymusic.bc.ca Text Insert - Handel in Italy Vancouver Bach Fest

Salvatore Lanzetti: Sonata in C Major Opus 2 no. 3

- for violoncello & basso continuo from Six Solos after an Easy and Elegant Taste for the Violoncello

George Frideric Handel: **Tanti Strali** нwv 197

– chamber duet —

Tanti strali al sen mi scocchi, quante stelle sono in ciel: Tanti fior, quanti ne tocchi, s'inamorano al tuo bel.

Ma se l'alma sempre geme, nell' amor arsa e consunta, questo avvien, perch'arde e teme dal tuo cor esser disgiunta.

Dunque annoda pur, ben mio, di catena immortale anch'il desio.

Ma se l'alma sempre geme, nell' amor arsa e consunta, questo avvien, perch'arde e teme dal tuo cor esser disgiunta.

But if a lover's soul is melancholic by nature, he will find love hard and all consuming, and his passion will, in time, be diffused, scourged and reproached by the harshness of your heart.

The lover, therefore, is bound and hurt, my dear, by the unchanging chains of his own desire.

Translation by Lucy Maxwell-Stewart



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Jenny Högström

Jenny Högström is a Swedish soprano currently based in Basel, Switzerland. She began her voice studies at 16. After having completed her Bachelor in Music at the College of Music in Piteå, Sweden, she went on to pursue advanced studies with Professor Ulrich Messthaler at Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Basel, graduating with a Master of Arts in Historical Performance with honours. In 2014 she completed a Master in Music Pedagogy. Jenny Högström appears regularly as a soloist in concert, oratorio, song recital and chamber music programmes with baroque ensembles such as La Cetra Barockorchester Basel, Il Profound, Alia Mens and Ensemble Odyssee. Jenny has worked with the renowned conductors Andrea Marcon, Hervé Niquet, René Jacobs and Michael Form. Among her more recent solo engagements include Theater Basel's productions of Charpentier's Medée, the role of Abra in Vivaldi's Juditha Triumphans, and the role of Calliope in Händel's Parnasso in Festa in 2016-17.

Terry Wey

Terry Wey was born in Bern, Switzerland and received his musical education as soloist of the Wiener Sängerknaben and at the Konservatorium Wien. Since then, he was invited to some of the most important concert halls and festivals throughout Europe and the USA. On opera stage, he performed in a variety of roles ranging from the title role in Händel's *Rinaldo* to Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, culminating in his debut at the Felsenreitschule Salzburg conducted by Riccardo Muti (2011) and Purcell's *Fairy Queen* under Nikolaus Harnoncourt (2014). He frequently works with Early-Music specialists such as William Christie, Marc Minkowski, Thomas Hengelbrock, Rubén Dubrovksy, Michael Hofstetter and Konrad Junghänel. Terry Wey's special interest in renaissance polyphony led him to found the vocal ensemble *Cinquecento*. His work is documented by numerous recordings for major CD labels, most recently his first solo album, *Pace e Guerra* (deutsche harmonia mundi, 2017). www.terrywey.com

Alexander Weimann

Alexander Weimann is one of the most sought-after ensemble directors, soloists, and chamber music partners of his generation. After traveling the world with ensembles like Tragicomedia, Cantus Cölln, the Freiburger Barockorchester, the Gesualdo Consort and Tafelmusik, he now focuses on his activities as Artistic Director of the Pacific Baroque Orchestra in Vancouver, and as music director of Les Voix Baroques, Le Nouvel Opéra and Tempo Rubato. Recently, he has conducted the Montreal-based baroque orchestra Ensemble Arion, Les Violons du Roy, the Victoria Sumphony Orchestra, Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Portland Baroque Orchestra; both the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra have regularly featured him as a featured soloist. Alexander Weimann can be heard on some 100 CDs. He made his North American recording debut with the ensemble Tragicomedia on the CD Capritio (Harmonia Mundi USA), and won worldwide acclaim from both the public and critics for his 2001 release of Handel's Gloria (ATMA Classique). Volume 1 of his recordings of the complete keyboard works by Alessandro Scarlatti appeared in May 2005. Critics around the world unanimously praised it, and in the following year it was nominated for an Opus Prize as the best Canadian early music recording. Recently, he has also released an Opus Award-winning CD of Handel oratorio arias with superstar soprano Karina Gauvin and his new Montreal-based ensemble Tempo Rubato, a recording of Bach's St. John's Passion, various albums with Les Voix Baroques of Buxtehude, Carissimi and Purcell, all with rave reviews. His latest album with Karina Gauvin and Arion Baroque Orchestra (Prima Donna) won a Juno Award in 2013, and a complete recording of Handel's *Orlando* was released in the fall of 2013, with an exciting group of international star soloists and the Pacific Baroque Orchestra performing.

Alexander Weimann was born in 1965 in Munich, where he studied the organ, church music, musicology (with a summa cum laude thesis on Bach's secco recitatives), theatre, medieval Latin, and jazz piano, supported by a variety of federal scholarships for the highly talented. In addition to his studies, he has attended numerous master classes in harpsichord and historical performance. To ground himself further in the roots of western music, he became intensely involved over the course of several years with Gregorian chant.

Alexander Weimann has moved to the Vancouver area with his wife, 3 children and pets, and tries to spend as much time as possible in his garden and kitchen.

Beiliang Zhu

Beiliang Zhu won the 1st prize and the Audience Award at the XVIII International Bach Competition in Leipzig 2012 (violoncello / baroque violoncello) as the first string player to have received this honour on a baroque instrument. Hailed by the New York Times as "particularly exciting", and by the New Yorker as bringing "telling nuances" and being "elegant and sensual, stylishly wild", Beiliang seeks artistry in a wide range of repertoire and different roles as a modern cellist, baroque cellist, and violist da gamba. She has given solo recitals at the Bach Festival Leipzig, Boston Early Music Festival, the Seoul Bach Festival, the Helicon Foundation, among others, as well as performing with internationally acclaimed artists and ensembles. Beiliang received her Master of Music from the Juilliard School in Historical Performance studying with Phoebe Carrai (baroque violoncello) and Sarah Cunningham (viola da gamba), Bachelor of Music Degree and Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music. Beiliang is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in Violoncello, under the guidance of Steven Doane, and a Master of Arts in Ethnomusicology at the Eastman School of Music. Fascinated by studies of cultures, Beiliang believes firmly in the communicative qualities of musical performances therefore invites the listeners to converse with her through various means. More information can be found on www.beiliangzhu.com.

Lucas Harris

Lucas Harris discovered the lute during his undergraduate studies at Pomona College, where he graduated summa cum laude. He then studied early music in Italy at the Civica scuola di musica di Milano and then in Germany at the Hochschule für Künste Bremen. He moved to Toronto in 2004 and became the regular lutenist for the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra. He plays with many other ensembles in Canada and the USA, including the Newberry Consort (Chicago), the Helicon Foundation (New York), and the Smithsonian Chamber Players (Washington, D.C.). He is on faculty at the Tafelmusik Summer and Winter Baroque Institutes, Oberlin Conservatory's Baroque Performance Institute, and EMV's Baroque Vocal Programme. In 2014 Lucas completed graduate studies in choral conducting and was chosen as the Artistic Director of the Toronto Chamber Choir. He has also directed projects for the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, the Ohio State University Opera Program, Les Voix Baroques, and the Toronto Consort.



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