

Program notes by Peter Roennfeldt – Cantilena Singers 1991-1999

No.1 – Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*, 20 September 1991

Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas*, first performed over 300 years ago, remains one of the most loved and admired works in the entire vocal repertoire. A true masterpiece in miniature lasting merely one hour, it conveys the essence of a tragic love story with a degree of emotional directness and conciseness unparalleled in Baroque theatre music. On closer inspection of its historical context, the surprising fact emerges that *Dido* was written at a time when England had no steady tradition of fully-sung, let alone tragic, opera. Notwithstanding precedents such as *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656) and Blow's *Venus and Adonis* (1682), both virtual operas, Purcell's *Dido* is indeed unique, even within its composer's own prolific output. Despite his obvious flair for human characterisation and large scale planning, Purcell's fame rested on his music for church and state occasions and incidental music to plays by Dryden and (adapted) Shakespeare. While works such as *King Arthur* (1691) and *The Fairy Queen* (1692) have attained the status of 'semi-operas' due to the sheer amount of fine music they contain, Purcell was destined not to create a successor to *Dido*. The opera's own performance history is rather fragmentary. After the premiere at Josiah Priest's girl's boarding school in Chelsea in 1689, it apparently remained unperformed until at least 1700, when it was revived with copious changes. Even today no complete score from Purcell's time has come to light, presenting many problems for editors and performers alike. English audiences were slow to accept fully-sung opera, and when they did in the early 1700's, it was the Italian style that monopolised the scene, particularly works such as those by Handel represented on tonight's programme.

The well-known story from Virgil's *Aeneid* was transformed by Purcell's librettist Nahum Tate into a poignant tale with a cautionary moral that would not have been lost on contemporary audiences. The tragic death of Dido, which is caused by the premature departure of Aeneas (albeit on false pretences conjured up by a jealous sorceress), points to the fact that England's own political destiny in 1689 was rather fragile. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 removed the pro-Catholic James II from the throne when the birth of a male heir in June that year made a 'popish' revival all too likely. His two daughters from an earlier marriage, Mary and Anne, were both Protestant by upbringing and were thus seen by certain Parliamentary factions as the best solution to the crisis. Mary returned on invitation with her husband William of Orange to rule as joint monarchs. After the deaths of Mary in 1694 and William in 1702, Queen Anne reigned until 1714, when her death without an heir engendered the succession of George, King of Hanover to the English throne. It is quite possible that 'Dido and Aeneas' was performed in April 1689 to coincide with the joint coronation - note the allusion made in the second chorus from Act I "When monarchs unite, how happy their fate; thy triumph at once o'er their foes and their fate". The librettist completes the allegory in Act III: marital and/or political disunion is the basis of a tragedy into which England herself might fall if the joint regency did not continue.

The arrival of the witches in Act II has often been criticised as lacking dramatic logic, or a concession to Restoration theatre audiences accustomed to supernatural or spectacular diversions. Despite the obvious resemblance to the witches' scene in "Macbeth", it is clearly possible that their presence in *Dido* is an integral part of the allegory described above. Continuing a trend seen in plays such as Thomas Shadwell's *The Lancashire Witches* (1681) where Roman Catholicism is subjected to savage satire. The Sorceress and Witches in 'Dido' represent the most feared threat to political stability in the 1680s, that of a revival of 'popery'. The connivance of their evil plan to remove Aeneas from Dido's recently-won embrace creates the dramatic irony essential to the emotional impact of the opera.

Musically, *Dido and Aeneas* is an interesting blend of national styles. A French-style overture and several of the choruses and dances recall the world of Louis XIV's court at Versailles. Italianate ground bass techniques are used in several arias including both Dido's "Ah! Belinda" and "When I am laid in earth". Italian styles of recitative, both secco (continuo) and *accompagnato* (full strings) are employed to carry the action and dialogue, but with Purcell's characteristic mastery of English text-setting. Finally, the profusion of choruses shows that "Dido" is in part descended from the English masque where ensemble singing and dancing played an important role. Purcell's key scheme is also finely wrought - each scene begins and ends in the same key, usually with a change of mode from minor to major. Those scenes which conclude in minor are those central to the human tragedy: Aeneas' reluctant compliance to the command of the "gods" (Act II Scene II) and Dido's death (Act III Scene II). One of the problems for scholars has been the apparent loss of the music that would have followed Aeneas' impassioned recitative in Act II - we are indebted to Thurston Dart's suggestion for music for the Grove's Dance at this point, which also restores the tonal plan in line with that of the rest of the work.

Due to a lack of appropriate facilities, tonight's performance will be presented in concert format, with minimal staging. Principal characters will enter and exit as the libretto requires, while the chorus will transform itself chameleon-like from Courtiers to Witches, Sailors, and finally Cupids. The audience is invited to use its collective imagination to supply the missing props, costumes and sets. Hopefully the circumstances will eventuate in the near future which will allow "Dido and Aeneas" and other Baroque opera to be presented, fully staged in "authentic" style, complete with gesturing and special effects. (With thanks to the Norton Critical Score, edited by Curtis Price 1986)

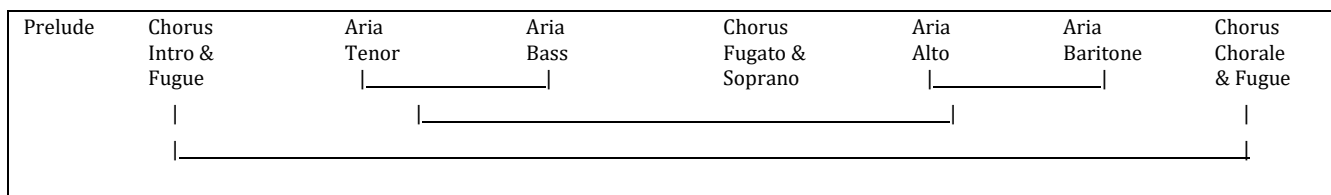
No.2 - Bach for Easter, 15 April 1992

Cantata BWV106 *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit*

Cantata BWV4 *Christ lag in Todesbanden*

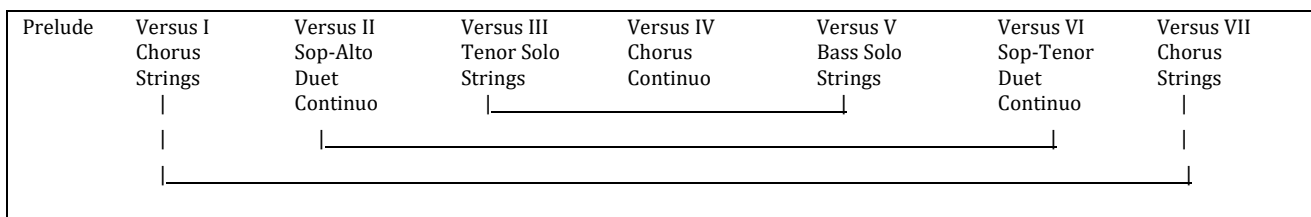
A great composer such as JS Bach is often subjected to exaggerated appraisals by his well-meaning admirers that neglect the reality of the social and musical environment in which he worked. While Bach's cantatas are central to his output, it would be wrong to marvel at the sheer number of works he composed in this genre (about 300) in comparison with contemporaries such as Telemann (over 1500 works) and Graupner (about 1400). Similarly, it is easy to express disbelief that the Leipzig authorities considered Bach to be a poor third choice (after Telemann and Graupner) for the position of Cantor of the Thomasschule upon the death of Kuhnau. Bach had achieved fame as an organist and composer of chamber music, with only a few dozen cantatas to his credit by 1723, barely enough for even half of an annual cycle. Moreover, Bach was rather slow to adopt the modern style of cantata which used a libretto of recitatives and arias in addition to Scripture and chorales. These factors should not however prevent an appreciation of his earliest works, two of which are being performed tonight. The variety and flexibility of the form of the early cantatas show not only his theological and musical roots, but also his inspired approach to the genre. It would be wrong to suggest only an 'experienced' composer can write great music!

Both Cantatas No.4 and No.106 date from Bach's short tenure in Mühlhausen (1707-8), and are appropriate for performance in Holy Week. Cantata 106 was probably composed for the funeral of Bach's uncle Tobias Lammerhirt in August 1707. A dotting relationship is suggested by the fact that Bach inherited a sizeable bequest which facilitated his marriage to Maria Barbara later that year. A depth of feeling is reflected in many aspects of the work, not the least being the ethereal other-worldly tone of the instrumentation (2 recorders, 2 violas da gamba and continuo). Several of Bach's early cantatas indicate a preoccupation with death, which was to become a constant feature of his adult life (he witnessed the passing of both his first wife and ten of his twenty children, many in infancy). The choice of texts, mostly Biblical in origin, expresses a calm resignation and optimism, made clearer by the contrast between quotes from Old and New Testaments. A series of alternating choruses and arias leads from the sobering thoughts of the inevitability of death through to a triumphant doxology based on a chorale of praise. Bach's love for formal symmetry is shown by the plan:



Bach revives the 17th century dialogue technique by juxtaposition of texts and vocal characters, both in immediate succession and simultaneously. For example, while the lower voices intone the Old Testament dictum "It is the old law - man, thou must perish" the soprano interjects with the penultimate verse from the book of Revelation "Yes, come Lord Jesus" while the recorders present the chorale "I have already placed my concerns before God". The obvious connection with Christ's own Passion is made by connecting two of his words from the cross "Into your hands I commend my spirit (Alto) and "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Baritone), the latter in combination with the funeral choral "In peace and joy I depart according to God's will".

A similar concern for accurate textual interpretation and formal control is evident in Cantata 4. Given the self-imposed constraint of setting Luther's seven stanza chorale without interpolations, Bach is able to create a variety of moods within a strictly symmetrical plan of chorale variations:



The chorale tune, which is heard clearly as a cantus firmus slightly varied in each movement, derives from the Easter plainsong sequence "Victimae paschali laudes" which had been adapted for German usage by Luther's colleague and musical adviser Johann Walther in 1524. The five part texture (with divided violas) heard in the prelude is characteristic of late 17th century composers such as Lully and Buxtehude. This fact, as well as Bach's strictness of form (in the tradition of chorale variations as used by his predecessors Böhm, Pachelbel and Kuhnau) points to an early date

of composition, probably for Easter Sunday 1708. Upon arrival in Leipzig, Bach was apparently requested for Easter music for the University church, which accounts for the addition of cornetto and trombones to double the parts of the rather inadequate vocal resources available there (for reasons of practicality tonight's performance follows what was probably Bach's original intention).

Each movement of Cantata 4 has elements of symbolism, both rhetorical and theological. A few points of interest include the 14 bars of the Prelude being the numerical code for Bach's name (B-2 + A-1 + C-3 + H-8 = 14), and the significance of the events in bars 27 (3 X 3 X 3 = compound perfection) of Verses III and V ("death" and "cross" respectively). The chorale text presents a spiritual journey from the death and entombment of Christ (Verses I and II), Christ's battle and victory over death (Verses III and IV), the significance of Christ's crucifixion for the believer (Versus V) and finally celebration of the feast (Versus VI) and Christian life (Versus VII). A further point of interest is the variety of Bach's settings of the "Hallelujah" which concludes each stanza, from understated solemnity (Versus II) to excited anticipation (Versus I) and jubilation (Versus VI).

No.3 – Sacred music of the Italian baroque, 20 September 1992

Monteverdi *Beatus vir* and *Confitebor tibi*

Carissimi *Jephte*

Handel *Dixit dominus*

It is difficult and perhaps unnecessary to maintain the distinction between the 'secular' and 'sacred' elements in Baroque vocal music. Composers of the time were expected to be familiar with all styles and they frequently pursued careers which alternated between the church and the theatre. The composers featured on today's programme are equally well known for their sacred and well as secular vocal works. Monteverdi participated in both the final phases of the Renaissance madrigal, motet and mass, as well as the early stages of opera; Carissimi produced some of the best oratorios of the seventeenth century as well as a fine series of secular cantatas; Handel's church music and oratorios as well as his many fine operas represent the culmination of Baroque vocal styles. It is a natural consequence of this many-faceted approach that a cross-fertilisation of styles occurred, and that Baroque sacred music took on many so-called secular elements. However, because of a residual conservative attitude emanating from Rome, much church music remains true to the ideal of 'a cappella' counterpoint 'a la Palestrina'. Today's programme features highlights of the Italian Baroque as witnessed by some of the major churches in Rome and Venice.

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) outranks all composers of his generation and was the key figure in the transition from Renaissance to Baroque style. He is best known for his brilliant operas *Orfeo* and *The Coronation of Poppea* and his magnificent *Vespers of 1610*, but he was equally able to produce fine 'everyday' music for his employers, first in Mantua and later in Venice. As 'maestro di cappella' at St Marks in Venice from 1613, Monteverdi was required to compose masses, motets and other liturgical works, and oversee their performance. While the resources of this affluent city could be called upon to produce lavish music for special occasions, more modest forces would no doubt have sufficed in normal circumstances. The *Selva morale e spirituale* of 1640 is such a publication - motets and psalm settings for chamber size ensemble of up to eight voice parts with keyboard basso continuo. *Beatus Vir* is scored for six voice parts, two violins and continuo, while *Confitebor tibi* in five parts features a soprano solo accompanied by a vocal and/or instrumental consort. Both psalm texts are set in a joyously self-confident manner, with occasional touches of madrigal-like painting. *Confitebor tibi* also features a virtuoso solo cadenza reminiscent of the *Vespers of 1610*.

Giacomo Carissimi (1605-1674) represents the more reserved approach favoured in church circles in Rome. His oratorios are a musical by-product of the counter-Reformation which had already produced a second flowering of Roman architecture, sculpture and visual art in the early seventeenth century. Due to their physical appearance, Roman churches of the period had become an expression of religious devotion tinged with mystical contemplation. Concurrent with such external expressions of faith, various orders and societies within the church sought to increase the level of spiritual awareness through greater knowledge of the Scriptures. The Congregation of the Oratory, founded by Philip Neri in 1575, for instance, sought to reach all classes of society through its spiritual exercises which frequently featured musical settings of Biblical texts. Thus the oratorio was born, which in the later Baroque took on many of the musical/theatrical devices of opera. Carissimi's large output of c.16 oratorios were composed for the German College in Rome supported by the Jesuit order. As Handel later discovered, the Old Testament provides the most dramatic situations, often featuring the people of Israel and its leaders in conflict with the enemies of Jehovah. *Jephte*, composed c.1650, is a tragic story of obedience to the will of God which overrides human emotions and relationships. The composer takes every opportunity to represent the militancy of the Israelites against the Ammonites, the joy of victory, as well as the pathos of Jephte's daughter as she laments her situation. Narration is provided by the 'Historicus' which is shared by several soloists, while the chorus participates both as characters in the drama as commentator. While *Jephte* is modest in comparison to the scale of Handel's oratorios, it features some of the most poignant music of the entire era.

Georg Frideric Handel (1685-1759) is known to modern audiences chiefly through the oratorios, operas and concertos written after his arrival in England in 1711. Less well-known are those works he composed during his student years in Germany and his sojourn in Italy (1706-1709). As an energetic composer aspiring to the heights of Italian opera, Handel saw some early theatrical successes in Venice, Naples and Florence. No doubt this exposure and his executant ability as a brilliant organist aroused the attention of various patrons in Rome. In the summer of 1707, he was commissioned for Vespers music for the Carmelite order, of which the *Dixit Dominus* setting is the best known. Throughout this work, the orchestral brilliance of Corelli and his contemporaries is evident, which accounts for the extreme virtuosity required of the five-part chorus. More expressive qualities are also to be seen in this work, chiefly in the arias and the duet 'De Torrente'. Underlining both of these tendencies is a sense of the traditional styles with a 'cantus firmus' treatment of plainsong at times, and a quite rigorous use of counterpoint, particularly in the 'Gloria'. Occasional touches of word-painting add a further level of interest such as the 'conquasabit' (He shall crush) chorus with its hammering chordal accents. Overall, this work is one of great exhilaration: a supreme challenge to the performers and a thrilling experience to the listener.

No.4 - Handel *Messiah*, 25 April 1993

Handel's *Messiah* is without doubt one of the most familiar works of the choral repertoire, having experienced an almost uninterrupted popularity since its composition over two hundred and fifty years ago. Every generation has inevitably reinterpreted the work according to the tastes and practices of its age, giving rise to many misconceptions and inaccurate renditions. Thanks to modern scholarship, these vestiges of the past are quickly giving way to a more enlightened approach.

Despite the persistence of the large choral society tradition with its annual pre-Christmas performances of *Messiah* throughout the English-speaking world, an informed re-evaluation of the work's true character can produce some interesting results. Firstly, a chamber-sized ensemble is now seen to be ideally suited to the buoyant rhythms, intricate counterpoint and subtle phrasings of Handel's score. The relatively light orchestration that relies on the string group (with doublings of oboes and bassoon in the choruses and obbligato trumpets and timpani at climactic moments), is no longer regarded as an impoverishment. In addition, brisk tempo and crisp articulation are essential aspects of a truly dynamic performance of such a work, with its many dance rhythms and operatic conventions.

Today's performance with a chorus of twenty-four and orchestra of twenty approximates the size of Handel's own ensembles. With the benefits of recent scholarship, including the work of Watkins Shaw in his definitive performing edition, the performers are endeavouring to present a version in sympathy with the composer's original intentions. Access to Handel's own autograph score, via a facsimile edition held by the State Library of Queensland has also aided our preparations.

Messiah was composed in London between 22 August and 12 September 1741, and premiered in Dublin on 13 April 1742. Subsequent performances in London under Handel's direction, beginning with its debut there in March 1743, were invariably also given in April or May, thus with an Eastertide context more appropriate to the major portion of its text. In addition to reinstating *Messiah* to the correct liturgical season, today's performance will include only those versions found in Handel's autograph score or heard in his performances of 1742 or 1743. Since Handel used a constantly changing cast of singers in his numerous performances of the work, he often rewrote or substituted new versions of arias to suit his soloists' abilities and preferences. The deviations from the familiar version which are being heard in today's performance are as follows:

No.6 Air "But Who May Abide" - This is the original version, in 3/8 time throughout. The more familiar setting was probably composed for the famous castrato Gaetano Guadagni who first sang in a "Messiah" performance in 1750. This earlier version may lack some of the vitality and drama of its counterpart, but it remains the only one Handel composed specifically for the bass voice.

No.14b Recitative "And lo, the Angel of the Lord" - This arioso version was composed for Mrs Clive, a singing actress engaged for the London performances of 1743, in order to expand her role as 'seconda donna' where she might have otherwise been restricted to recitatives and simpler arias.

No.18 Air "Rejoice greatly" - This is the original version in 12_8 time throughout, which captures the lilting mood of the text most effectively. It was retained by Handel until 1749, when a new singer Giulia Frasi was introduced and he recomposed the aria in simple quadruple time with an increased emphasis on vocal virtuosity.

No.20 Air "He Shall Feed His Flock" - It appears that in the first performance this aria was sung throughout by the contralto Mrs Cibber, despite the fact the autograph score is in the soprano key. The practice of sharing this aria between two singers (an alto and soprano respectively), dates from 1745. However, the calming effect of the female alto voice in its most expressive register throughout adds its own stamp of authority to this version, without the somewhat jarring effect of the entrance of a second singer who modulates to a higher key.

No.38 Duet and Chorus "How Beautiful are the Feet" and No.39 Air "Their Sound is Gone Out" - According to Jennen's original libretto, Romans 10:15 "How beautiful...that preach" is followed by verse 18 "Their sound". Apparently, Handel's original Da Capo aria for soprano, which sets both verses, was replaced by a setting for alto duet followed by a chorus in all his performances until 1745. This created a discrepancy in the text since the duet version sets Isaiah 52:7 "How beautiful...that bringeth" followed by the chorus based on verse 9 "Break forth". Thus the text "Their sound is gone out" was not included in the Dublin performance, but was reinstated the following year in the form of an arioso for tenor and continuo. In 1749 Handel shortened his original soprano aria and set the words "Their sound" as a chorus, in the form commonly heard today.

In addition to these variations, it is hoped the audience will enjoy the opportunity to hear the work complete. Thus the chorus "Let all the Angels", the duet and chorus "O Death Where is Thy Sting" and the arias "Thou Art Gone Up" and "If God Be For Us" will be restored to their rightful context.

Postscript - A Tribute to Brisbane's Own Handel Scholar and 'Messiah' Expert

Today's performance is not only a milestone in the development of both our ensembles - it is also a revival of a tradition that existed in Brisbane during the 1950s. Dr Robert Dalley-Scarlett, a well-known musician lived in Brisbane from 1919 until his death in 1959. In addition to work as a composer, critic, teacher and organist, he was an active researcher into eighteenth century music. His chief area of interest was Handel's vocal music which he performed with his own Handel Society from the 1930s. His vast library of books and scores including an extensive set of Handel scores published by Walsh in London in the mid-eighteenth century now resides in the Fisher Library of the University of Sydney.

Dalley-Scarlett's views about the correct performance of the oratorios and *Messiah* in particular were frequently at odds with the prevailing post-Victorian large choral society tradition. Performance criteria such as those mentioned above regarding size of orchestra and choir, orchestration and tempo were formulated into a booklet which was published by Carl Fisher in New York in 1955 - "Handel's 'Messiah': How Can We Realise the Composer's Intentions?" As far as possible, these principles were observed in Dalley-Scarlett's own annual complete performances of 'Messiah' with the Handel Society commencing in 1951. The most intriguing aspect of his theories was his insistence that any Handel oratorio, if performed complete and with appropriate tempi, should last no longer than two and a half hours. Given that Handel's concerts began at 12pm and that both intervals normally included an organ concerto, Dalley-Scarlett surmised that patrons would need to be on their way home by 3pm in order to observe the English custom of "tea at four".

Recognition for this research came from overseas in the form of the Halle Medal, from Handel's birthplace, but Dalley-Scarlett was largely working against the odds in Brisbane which had barely heard of harpsichords or Baroque performance practice in the 1940s and 50s. Nevertheless he inspired others to continue the work, and his ideas were vindicated by the extensive research emanating from England in the late 1950s and 1960s, and more recently the period instrument movement. One Australian conductor who had taken to heart Dalley-Scarlett's ideas and been given personal encouragement was Charles Mackerras. His complete recording of 1967 with the English Chamber Orchestra and the Ambrosian Singers was one of the first to include some of the alternative versions which Dalley-Scarlett had championed in his writings, and notably, is precisely two and a half hours playing time. A recent recording by Nicholas McGegan, the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and the U.C. Berkeley Chamber Chorus, one of the few to include all possible alternative versions (thanks to the technology of the programmable compact disc player), is yet another example of faithfulness to the score and similarly falls within Dalley-Scarlett's "time limit".

The present writer first learned of the work of this notable Brisbane musician when researching for a Bachelor of Music (Honours) thesis at the University of Queensland in 1978. The completed thesis "Robert Dalley-Scarlett: His Contribution to Musical Life in Brisbane, 1919-1959" is held in The University of Queensland Library.

No.5 – *The Baroque in Germany*, 21 November 1993

Schütz *Saul, was vergolst du mich* and *Historia von der Geburt Jesu Christi*

Schein *Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag* and *Herr, wenn ich dich nur habe* (*Opella Nova* Part II 1626)

Pachelbel *Magnificat in D*

Buxtehude *Cantate Domino*

Bach *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* BWV 225

The title of today's programme is perhaps a slight misnomer. 'Germany' in the 17th and 18th centuries was more of a cultural concept than a political reality. Divisions existed on various levels including the religious (Catholic versus Protestant) and the political. Although technically united under the banner of the Holy Roman Empire, Germans were residents of either a free city such as Hamburg, or independent states such as Saxony which might in turn be further subdivided into duchies or principalities. Therefore there was no capital city in the modern sense (such as Paris or London) - each socio-political unit had its own seats of government, education and commercial centres. Because of this fragmentation, the history of German music is one of diverse activity of numerous locally-based musicians satisfying the needs of their particular employer and the artistic institutions they supported. The career of J.S. Bach, for example was typical of many - a succession of appointments at small courts and churches, concluding with a prestigious position as Cantor in Leipzig which included responsibility for most of the music in the city's four churches.

A further factor is the disruption caused by the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), which destroyed much of the economy and lifestyle of large tracts of Germany, followed by a period of relative peace and rebuilding. Notwithstanding the achievements of earlier composers such as Praetorius and Hassler, the so-called 'Golden Age' of German Church Music is a by-product of this later period of relative stability. Thus the careers of persons such as Pachelbel, Buxtehude, Bach and Telemann could prosper precisely at a time when church and civic institutions were consolidating and the Baroque style was reaching maturity. Conversely, the careers of Schütz and Schein were greatly affected by the ravages of war, which had a direct influence on their musical output.

Today's programme offers an overview of the vast repertoire of sacred music from North Germany's greatest composers. Despite the strong Lutheran elements (including the use of the vernacular and the familiar chorale tunes), a strong Latin influence persists. Luther himself had encouraged the continued use of Latin, and even in Bach's day certain portions of the service would have been sung in this manner. Furthermore, most well-informed musicians of the day frequently turned to Italy for musical inspiration, many of them travelling south for tours of study. Each of the works on today's programme could have been performed during a typical Lutheran service during the Baroque era. The length and nature of the music varied from short motets for solo voices or choir (often in Latin), to large scale concerto-type works for large ensembles (often displaced in two or more choirs of instruments and/or voices), and in later times a cantata (usually in German). Festival days often featured an extended liturgical piece (Mass or Magnificat setting) or possibly a dramatic oratorio.

Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) was based for most of his life in Dresden, at the court of the Elector of Saxony. Following his two visits to Venice he published several volumes of works that successfully translated the Italian idioms and genres into a German context. In the style of the Gabriellis, Schütz combined multiple choirs with great effect. *Saul, was vergolst du mich?* is a dramatic scene of the conversion of Saul - the voice of God rises from the deep into a climax of 16 parts. The work is contained in his third volume of *Symphoniarum Sacrum* published in 1650 and therefore composed for larger forces that could not be supported during the Thirty Years War. Schütz's later years saw him specialising in dramatic settings, including three Passions, and his Easter and Christmas oratorios. The *Historia von der Geburt Jesu Christi* is one of his most endearing and imaginative works. As stated in his preface, Schütz here claims to be the first to compose true recitative in the German language in the Evangelist's part. The characters of the story are set for an appropriate voice type and instrumentation - the Angel (soprano and two violins), the Shepherds (altos and 'rustic' recorders), the Wise Men (tenors and violins), the Chief Priests and Scribes (basses and 'serious' trombones) and King Herod (bass and 'regal' trumpets).

Johann Hermann Schein (1586-1630), a direct contemporary of Schütz, was based in Leipzig, fulfilling similar duties to Bach's a century later. His *Opella Nova*, two volumes of few-voiced 'concertato' settings of either chorale tunes or motet-like structures based on Biblical texts, were composed 'in the Italian manner customary nowadays'. Similarly Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) wrote numerous small scale works for performance in his services and sacred concerts in Lübeck, a Hanseatic city near Hamburg. His *Cantate Domino* is technically a Latin motet, but its solo/ensemble alternation is more akin to the later German church Cantata. This work contains some of his most joyous and expressive solo writing.

Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706) also composed much in Latin as well as German. Based in Nuremberg, his works frequently require large forces, though his *Magnificat in D* is a modest setting for four-part choir and continuo. In

addition to composing cantatas and oratorios for Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) wrote a number of German motets for special occasions. Frequently these were funeral works on texts of comfort and consolation, but his brilliant double choir *Singet dem Herrn* is decidedly joyous. Employing all the complexities of counterpoint in four and eight parts, this motet has as its centre piece an expressive setting of a familiar chorale tune.

This programme of vocal works, though diverse, is representative of the vast wealth of Baroque sacred music, a genre that reached its zenith in the churches of Germany.

No.6 - *The Pleasures of Versailles*, 31 July 1994

F.Couperin *Motet de Ste Suzanne*

Rameau *Quam dilecta tabernacula*

Charpentier *Les Plaisirs de Versailles*

Today's concert offers but a small sampling of the vast musical treasures of the French baroque. While the mere mention of Versailles conjures up images of grandeur, courtly ritual and spectacle, a large part of France's musical world existed beyond the rarefied atmosphere of the royal court. To be sure, Louis XIV (reg.1643-1715) ensured that the most skilled artists were employed to provide music for the various theatrical, religious and ceremonial performances. However, the highly structured pecking order and a rather monopolistic system of institutional organisation prevented certain talented musicians from achieving their due recognition.

It is evident that Lully (1632-1687), in his role as director of the Académie Royale de Musique, ensured that no other musical or theatrical ventures could rival his own. Marc-Antoine Charpentier (c.1634-1704), who was well versed in both Italian and French vocal styles and had theatrical abilities, would therefore have been treated with jealousy and suspicion by Lully. Despite some early success with the Comédie Française and collaborations with Molière, the majority of this theatrical works would have had only a limited exposure. In the meantime, he composed prolifically for the churches of Saint Chapelle and Saint Louis. Though he never attained a major court post, it appears that the King assisted his career by providing a pension and arranging employment as music master for various members of the royal family.

It is probably during his tenure in the 1680's with the Grand Dauphin (Louis XIV's eldest son) that Charpentier wrote his courtly pastoral-divertissement *Les Plaisirs de Versailles*. The modest instrumental resources and small cast of singers implies a chamber performance, while the scoring for recorders (and implied strings) and continuo suggests a pastoral setting. The loose plot presents a lively debate between La Musique and La Conversation regarding their respective 'pleasures' which is interrupted by Comus, god of feasting and Le Jeu who offer alternative delights. In addition, several royal references and French theatrical conventions can be seen, notably the stately Overture and lively Menuet in scene 2.

About the score:...This work exists only in manuscript form in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, as does unfortunately, the majority of this great composer's output. Thanks are due to the Bibliothèque officials who made available a facsimile copy with remarkable promptness and without the customary 'red tape'. Transcription of the musical score was made by myself, while the far less legible French text was 'decoded' by Huguette Brassine, whose assistance is hereby gratefully acknowledged. Interested persons may view the score after today's concert.

The royal court also held a prime place in the arena of church music, though largely via the 'grand motet' which was preferred by a king with little patience for a fully sung high mass. This form, developed by Michel Richard de Lalande (1657-1726) parallels the multi-sectional layout of the English verse anthem and the German church cantata, with alternating choruses, solos and duets. Elsewhere, in Parisian churches and convents the grand motet was also cultivated, though with a leavening of Mass and Te Deum settings and oratorios. For less festive occasions, the 'petit motet' for a few soloists and continuo was also a possibility.

Judging by the careers of Charpentier and François Couperin (1668-1733), there was a rich musical life in the churches and convents of Paris and elsewhere. Couperin was organist at St Gervais from 1685 until his death, in addition to holding some minor court posts. Like Charpentier, he was open to Italianate techniques, while retaining a truly French refinement and elegance. His *Motet de Ste Suzanne* is best described as a petit motet since it may be performed by as few as three singers and three instrumentalists. In today's performance the treble instrument lines are being shared by violins and flutes, while the solos and duets will be sung by various members of the ensemble. The refrain 'Jubilemus' is one of the few 'choruses' composed by Couperin though its harmonic texture maintains a chamber music-like clarity.

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) came to public notice firstly as a keyboard player and theorist, and only later at age 50 as a theatrical composer. He was eventually considered to be the 18th century's stylistic successor to Lully, but at a time when Versailles no longer held a monopoly on audience taste and musical life in general. His early sacred music forms a small though significant part of his oeuvre, chiefly through 'grands motets' including *Quam dilecta*. The mellifluous quality of flutes with strings is exploited to great advantage in Rameau's sensitive setting of Psalm 84. Of particular interest is the complex fugal chorus 'Cor meum', and the expressive writing for the solo voices and the profoundly moving final chorus.

Cantilena Singers has thoroughly enjoyed its initial excursion into the French style - we hope to return to it with you, again soon!

No.7 – Buxtehude *Membra Jesu nostri*, 12 October 1994

Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) is recognised as one of the greatest German composers between Schutz and JS Bach, though his fame rests largely upon his organ works. A close examination of his sizeable vocal output nevertheless reveals remarkable skills of text setting, vocal writing, and profound spiritual depth. Based in Lübeck as organist of the famous Marienkirche from 1668 until his death, Buxtehude preserved and enriched the local tradition of *Abendmusiken*, special concerts of sacred music presented on five Sundays in November-December. The vocal works composed for these concerts and for regular services represent a transitional phase in church music between the early Baroque motet/sacred concerto (represented by Schütz) and the later cantata (culminating in JS Bach). Frequently the term cantata is used retrospectively to describe works by Buxtehude and his contemporaries Tunder, Hammerschmidt and Pachelbel. These composers, however, would have described most of their sacred works as *Kirchenmusik* or *Kirchenstück*.

The Passion work *Membra Jesu nostri* is at once a unique work in the composer's output and the development of Baroque church music. Composed in 1680, it may well have been performed during Holy Week - its length would have precluded inclusion in a normal Sunday service, while the textual content would have been inappropriate for the *Abendmusiken*. Evidence of a performance of the cantatas separately, but not as a cycle, exists in the performing parts prepared by Gustav Düben in his role as Director of music for the King of Sweden. Düben was a friend of Buxtehude who collected, copied and performed much of the composer's vocal music. In fact, his manuscript copies are the major source for modern editions of this repertoire, including the one published by Merseburger Verlag which is being used in tonight's performance. It is obvious though that the composer planned the work as a unified whole which is best heard *in toto*. As such it parallels the oratorio-passion settings which became fashionable in the early 18th century.

The text of *Membra Jesu nostri* is based on the long poem *Salve mundi salutare* by Arnulf of Louvain (d.1250). The seven cantatas focus in turn on a body part of the crucified Christ - for each, Buxtehude selected three stanzas of the poem as the basis of aria movements. These are framed by a large concerto movement based on pertinent texts from Scripture. For example, Cantata I *Ad Pedes* commences with the biblical text "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him..." while the aria stanzas refer to the nails in the feet of Christ. Like many Lutheran composers, Buxtehude frequently set Latin texts, but such an extended use of a mystical, and at times sensual text is quite rare. The medieval poem was apparently well known in 17th century Germany, both in the original Latin and in translation. It was also subject to vernacular paraphrases, such as the familiar chorale text by Paul Gerhardt "O Sacred Head now wounded".

On a symbolic level, the use of the number seven is significant. There is an obvious parallel here with the so-called "Seven Last Words of Christ" which has been set musically by composers including Schutz and Haydn. Buxtehude gives particular prominence to the Cantata VI *Ad Cor* by the use of a full five-part string texture. While the other cantatas begin with a short instrumental sonata for two violins, gamba and continuo, this one commences with an extended movement in several contrasting sections. Large-scale planning is evident in the choice of keys which unify each cantata:- C minor-E flat major-G minor-D minor-A minor-E minor-C minor. A similar concern for unity is seen in the consistent use of a five-part vocal ensemble, with the exception of Cantata V (ATB) and Cantata VI (SSB).

Throughout *Membra Jesu nostri*, harmonic and melodic richness abounds. The question of word painting in such an emotion-filled text naturally arises, but one searches in vain for "madrigalisms". A single notable example of such descriptive word setting however can be seen in the expressive dissonances on the text "What are these wounds in thine hands?" at the opening of Cantata III *Ad manus*. Instrumental effects are also rather restricted, though special mention should be made of the "Sonata in Tremolo" at the beginning of Cantata II *Ad genua*.

We trust you will enjoy our performance of this singular work by Buxtehude. We also recommend the definitive recording recently release by the Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists and Fretwork, under the direction of John Eliot Gardiner.

No.8 - JS Bach *Mass in B minor*, 30 October and 1 November 1994

JS Bach's *Mass in B Minor* was completed in 1748, just two years before his death, at a time when the composer was completing several large projects that aptly summarised his achievements. Alongside the *Art of Fugue* and *A Musical Offering*, Bach's supreme mastery of form and counterpoint is everywhere present in the *Mass in B Minor*. According to Lutheran practice, a limited use of Latin was upheld in the Leipzig churches - hence the *Missa* (comprising only the Kyrie and Gloria sections) was set by Bach no less than five times, in addition to some *Sanctus* settings. Thus when the composer compiled a complete setting of the Ordinary, he could draw upon some of his early works - the *Missa* of 1733 (dedicated to the newly crowned King of Saxony in the hope of a prestigious court appointment) and a *Sanctus* from his first years in Leipzig. The remaining portions were completed by rearrangements of several movements from his cantatas (both sacred and secular) and some newly composed sections. Despite this act of compilation from a variety of sources, the *Mass in B Minor* remains a satisfying complete work which outranks any other single setting from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Evidence of large scale planning abounds in the work, though there are many individual touches that bring to light Bach's personal understanding of the time-honoured text. Scored for a chorus of five parts, expanding to six in the *Sanctus* and eight in the *Osanna*, Bach makes extreme demands on the voices in terms of counterpoint and florid writing. Solo movements do not dominate to the same extent, but provide a welcome contrast of texture and instrumental colours, such as the use of solo flute, oboe, horn and violin. In contrast to late Baroque practice, Bach avoids the customary use of the extended Da Capo aria form, while on a few occasions a solo merges directly into a chorus movement. Fugal writing in this work is unsurpassed, but Bach avoids the temptation to display compositional skill at the expense of text setting. Of particular note is the chromatic expressiveness of the *Kyrie*, and the bold yet understated nature of the *Dona nobis pacem*. Dramatic moments such as the *Crucifixus* and *Et resurrexit* are also treated in an individual manner appropriate to the text. Bach's awareness of tradition is also a major element, chiefly in the quotation of Gregorian chant in the *Credo* and *Confiteor*. A more contemporary stylistic source for some of the large movements is the concerto grosso, a form which Bach had already mastered in his secular instrumental works. For example, in the larger sections of the *Gloria* and *Credo*, contrasts of texture occur between orchestra and voices, and between soloists and full ensemble. In similar vein, the *Sanctus* is scored for double choir in the Venetian style popular throughout the Baroque.

Bach's *Mass in B Minor* is a supreme example of liturgical music that rises above its historical context. The sheer exhilaration and profundity of this musical setting is unsurpassed.

No.9 – Music for the Chamber, 26 March 1995

Hassler *Tantzen und springen* and *Mein Gmüth ist mir verwirret* from *Lustgarten* (1601)

Schein *Ich will nun fröhlich sein* from *Venus Kätzlein* (1609) and *O Amarilli zart* from *Diletti pastorali* (1624)

Albert *Wer das Alter schätzt erhaben* from *Arien volume 8* (1650)

F.Couperin *Les Solitaires, La Marche, La Caristade, Le Remerciement* from *Airs sérieux* (1711-12)

Charpentier *Serenata Sú, sú, son dormite amanti* (c.1685)

Purcell *If ever I more riches did desire* and *Hark, how the wild musicians sings*

Handel *Quel fior che all' albe ride* and *Nò, di voie vo fidarmi* (1741)

A.Scarlatti *O morte, Cor mio, deh non languire* and *Sdegno la fiamma estinse*

Monteverdi *Volgendo il ciel – Movete al mio bel* from Book VIII madrigals (1638)

Cantilena Singers is proud to present the first concert in its 1995 series entitled *Baroque Treasures and Pleasures – Vocal Music for Every Occasion*. During this year we focus on the major performance venues of vocal music composed in the 17th and 18th centuries, namely the Chamber, the Court, and the Church. Music in the Baroque era was largely a product of time, place and patronage. As such, works were mostly produced on demand for particular occasions, and often for specific performers.

Music for the Chamber takes the listener into the world of the salons and drawing rooms where vocal music would have enhanced an evening's after dinner entertainments or provided an interlude between the more serious duties of government or commerce. Just as a madrigal or chanson would have served well in such a situation in the Renaissance, Baroque musicians in each country developed their own particular genres of secular music. The madrigal underwent changes in Italy and Germany until it was replaced by the chamber cantata. Meanwhile, in England and France secular vocal music developed along rather different lines. Of interest is the growing influence of the Italian language and musical style which made inroads throughout Europe, as seen in the works of cosmopolitan figures such as Handel.

Topics including love, nature and mythology form the basis of many of the texts, though occasionally, specific contemporary events and persons are the subject. Today's programme illustrates such a cross section of interests – love in its many forms, enjoyment of nature and the frequent appearance of well-known characters such as Amarilli. In addition, two occasional works referring to the lives and deeds of contemporary historical figures are included – chamber music often served both poet and patron.

Composers in Germany were much drawn to Italian styles in the years around 1600. Just as English composers took to the madrigal in the 1590s, German composers such as Hassler and Schein quickly adapted the form for their own use. Schein's madrigal *O Amarilli zart* bears a striking resemblance to similar settings by contemporary Italian and English composers. Similarly, Hassler made effective use of the balletto form with its familiar *fa la la* refrain in *Tantzen und Springen*. A more authentic German voice is heard in the partsong *Mein Gmüth ist mir verwirret*, whose melody later became famous as the Lutheran chorale *O sacred head now wounded*. An interest in rich, full textures can be seen in *Ich will nun singen*, which comprises eight parts and rapid interchanges between choirs of female and male voices. As the 17th century progressed, the all-pervading influence of the keyboard continuo is seen in the German song forms. Heinrich Albert was a master of the continuo Lied, publishing no less than eight volumes in rapid succession. *Wer der Alter schätzt erhaben* from the final volume is an occasional piece in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of a certain Michael Friessen's attainment of the status of Doctor. In this work, solo voices alternate with chorus, interspersed with short 'symphonies' for 2 violins and continuo.

While Italian influences can be seen throughout the German speaking countries in the 17th century, France remained proudly aloof. Charpentier was therefore almost unique in his adoption of the Italian form of the chamber cantata. His contact with Carissimi in Rome was no doubt an important influence in this regard. The *Serenata Sú, sú, sú, non dormite amanti* exhibits the sectional approach common to the cantata. Chorus sections alternate with solos, connected with instrumental ritornellos provided by the typical trio sonata combination of two violins and continuo. François Couperin was best known for his solo keyboard works, though his extensive sacred vocal output is much admired. As he was not drawn to theatrical pursuits, Couperin's approach is more intimate, as can be seen in his small but significant output of secular vocal works. *Les Pellerines* exists also in a solo harpsichord version published in the 3rd Ordre (suite) in 1713. Of interest are the repeated allusions to the Isle of Cythera, made famous by Watteau in his painting *L'Embarquement pour Cythère* (1717) and later immortalised in Debussy's piano piece *L'Isle Joyeuse*. Themes of love abound, though with a typically French reserve, refined elegance and subtlety.

In late 17th century England foreign influences were present, but always adapted to local tastes. Thus Purcell's theatrical music is perfectly suited to English theatrical practice, though with some suggestion of French and Italian styles. Purcell's solo songs are a by-product of this vast output of incidental music, notwithstanding his sizeable contribution to that typically English form, the catch. On several occasions the songs take on larger proportions, with

the addition of obbligato instruments, and alternations of solo and chorus singing. The description of works such as *If Ever I More Riches Did Desire* and *Hark How the Wild Musicians Sing* as 'symphony songs' is at best a compromise. They exhibit features common to both the solo song and stage music, and thus could be described as 'cantata', though the term would not have been used by Purcell himself. Throughout, these delightful settings exhibit the composer's textual skill and melodic grace. Following the premature death of Purcell, England witnessed an influx of Italian musicians and other foreigners in the early 18th century. Following his successes with opera in England in the 1720s, Handel returned only briefly to the Italian language, as seen in the chamber duets performed today. Both *Quel fior che all'alba ride* and *No, di voi non vo' fidarmi* exhibit the vocal virtuosity associated with Italian opera, despite being housed in the more intimate scoring for two solo voices and continuo. Composed in 1741, both duets were transformed into chorus settings in *Messiah*, completed the following year. Naturally, questions of appropriateness of style and text setting arise - Italian vocal virtuosity in a chamber setting versus the so-called 'sacred' style of the English oratorio chorus - may the listener decide!

Italy produced a continuous succession of skilled composers of vocal music in the Baroque, though Monteverdi and Alessandro Scarlatti are probably the most renowned. Within their works are represented the highlights of both 17th century opera and vocal chamber music. Today's programme features a selection of their contribution to the madrigal. Of interest is Scarlatti's revival of the Renaissance *a cappella* style while Monteverdi, the earlier composer, experimented freely with the inclusion of instruments, the continuo and soloistic vocal writing. Scarlatti's madrigals were relatively unknown until published for the first time in 1980 in an edition by Jürgen Jürgens. Monteverdi's Eighth Book of Madrigals includes the occasional work *Introductione al ballo*, composed for the coronation in 1637 of Ferdinand as Holy Roman Emperor. Thus this text is more laudatory and allegorical in tone, unlike the Scarlatti madrigals which discuss the more usual aspects of love and its disappointments.

No.10 – Music for the Court, 6 August 1995

From the Court of Francesco I, Prince of Mantua: Monteverdi *L'Orfeo - Favola in Musica* (1607)

From the Court of Louis XVI, King of France: Lully *George Dandin, ou Le Grand Divertissement Royal de Versailles* (1668)

From the Court of Frederick Augustus II, Elector of Saxony: Zelenka *Lauda Jerusalem ZWV 102, Confitebor tibi Domine ZWV 73. Nisi Dominus ZWV 92* (c.1726-28)

From the Court of William III and Mary, King and Queen of England: Purcell *Come Ye Sons of Art* (1694)

Cantilena Singers is proud to present the second concert in its 1995 series entitled *Baroque Treasures and Pleasures - Vocal Music for Every Occasion*. During this year we focus on the major performance venues of vocal music composed in the 17th and 18th centuries, namely the Chamber, the Court, and the Church. Music in the Baroque era was largely a product of time, place and patronage. *Music for the Court* takes the listener into the world of the palaces and courts of the kings, princes and dukes of Europe where vocal music would have enhanced many a state occasion or provided an evening's after dinner entertainment. Today's programme includes works composed both for the stage, the chapel and the palace - such was the variety of musical life in a Baroque court.

Claudio Monteverdi spent the first part of his long career in the service of the Gonzaga family who ruled the north Italian principality of Mantua. While this association was not always happy or financially rewarding, it did see the production of some of the composer's finest madrigals and church music, as well as his epoch-making essays in the relatively young medium of fully-sung opera. *L'Orfeo* is widely recognised as the first truly great opera, combining his innate dramatic sense with skilful vocal writing. Monteverdi adopted the novel technique of monody for 'affective' representation of the most dramatic sections of text. This vocal idiom had been developed in the neighbouring city of Florence, just prior to 1600, but here it is used with great effect for the first time. Characters present monologues and dialogue in a heightened form of sung recitation, while the lyrical passages are treated in a more flowing and melodically conceived manner. A number of aspects of *L'Orfeo* are as 'contemporary' – the choruses are generally madrigal-like in construction. As in classical Greek drama upon which this work is based, the chorus acts as a commentator and assists in setting the various moods. The excerpts being performed today are taken from the first Act, where the mood is one of general rejoicing at the wedding of Orpheus and Euridice. The stirring *Toccata* introduces the performance with vigour and grandeur.

Jean-Baptiste Lully was in many ways the natural successor to the first generation of Italian court composers of opera, since he was of Florentine birth. On arrival at the court of Louis XIV as a young man, 'Lulli' saw that in order to succeed there, he had to deny his own natural origins and become a true *musicien française*. After the death in 1661 of the chief minister Mazarin (under whose tenure several Italian operas had been seen at court), Lully seized the opportunity to side with an ascendant French faction and foreswear all former allegiances. It is thus ironic that the upstart from Florence oversaw the birth of the French equivalent of opera, the *tragédie lyrique*, which ensured that any further Italian influence was forestalled until the eighteenth century. Before producing the first such work *Cadmus et Hermonione* in 1673, Lully had collaborated with several writers on theatrical projects. The work performed today is such a piece – a *divertissement* that provided a musical interlude within the play *George Dandin* by Molière, first performed at Versailles on 15 July 1668. In this *comédie*, all political and philosophical pretension is eschewed in favour of a frivolous but entertaining debate between the followers of Bacchus and Cupid. Typically French is the graciousness of the text setting, devoid of display and virtuosity, and the ideal balance between instrumental, solo and choral sections. Ever-present are the rhythms of the French court dances such as the *courante* and the *minuet*.

Jan Dismas Zelenka was born in Bohemia, and after some time spent in Prague was appointed as a violone player at the Electoral court of Saxony in Dresden in 1710. Following further study with Fux in Vienna, Zelenka returned to Dresden in 1719 where he further enhanced his reputation as a composer of Catholic liturgical music alongside the Kapellmeister Johann David Heinichen. A larger proportion of Zelenka's sacred output are the 41 Vesper psalm settings composed between 1725 and c.1730. The variations to be observed in these psalm settings – of length, difficulty and scoring – indicate the status for the feast for which each was composed and the musicians intended to perform each setting. The three works heard today are relatively short, an indication that each was an 'Ordinary' (as opposed to 'Solemn') setting. Without doubt, each of these compositions was intended to be performed by the choir and instrumentalists of the Dresden Catholic court church. This choir had been founded in about 1710, shortly after the establishment of the Catholic royal chapel. Young choristers and instrumentalists were recruited in neighbouring Bohemia, brought to Saxony and were accommodated and educated at the Jesuit house in Dresden. It is probably that these three psalm settings were composed between the years 1726 and 1728, during the time when the court had taken the decision to expand the membership of this choir. Two of these works (*Confitebor* and *Lauda Jerusalem*) were also held in the music collection of the St Vitus Cathedral in Prague. An important structural feature of each of these three

psalm settings is the use of *ostinato* (a short musical figure repeated several times in succession). This is most apparent in the *Nisi Dominus* setting of 202 bars, composed above a pattern which provides a relentless energy throughout.

Henry Purcell was nothing if not versatile. Throughout his short career he produced a vast amount of music on demand for the court, the stage, the church and the chamber. His skill at setting English texts is unsurpassed, as is his gracious vocal writing. Purcell's rise to prominence in the 1680s coincided with the shortlived reign of James II, whose hasty removal by Parliament enabled the coronation of William of Orange and Mary (herself a Stuart) as joint monarchs in 1688. Queen Mary was much loved both by her people and Purcell, who immortalised her with no less than six Birthday odes. *Come Ye Sons of Art* is the last of these, composed for the celebrations of April 1694. As is typical of such ceremonial works, the text is allegorical, full of references to things noble and musical. Attributed to Nahum Tate, the librettist of *Dido and Aeneas*, the poem's stanzas are treated in the style of a cantata, with alternating solos, duets and choruses. The prevailing mood is one of celebration, though not without some poignant moments in the Overture, and the solo *Bid the Virtues* (with oboe obbligato). Scored for strings, oboes and trumpets, the fanfare-like quality of the opening and closing sections in D major gives full flight to the regal connotations of the works. Tragically, Purcell was called upon to compose another work for Queen Mary – the immortal Funeral Sentences – on her premature death in December at age 33. [Programme details on the Zelenka works provided by Jan Stockigt]

No.11 – Music for the Church, 5 November 1995

From the Basilica San Marco, Venice: G.Gabrieli *Hodie completi sunt* (*Symphoniae sacrae II*, 1615), Monteverdi *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* (*Selva morale e spirituale*, 1640)

From the Court Chapel of the Elector of Saxony, Dresden: Schütz *Herr, unser Herrscher* (*Psalmen Davids*, 1619)

From the Jesuit Church of St Louis, Paris: Charpentier *Venite ad me – in Festo corporis Christ canticum* (c.1686)

From the Thomaskirche, Leipzig: Bach *Jesu, meine Freude* BWV 227 (1723)

From the Chapel Royal, London: Purcell *Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem* (c.1689)

From the Chapel of the Duke of Chandos, Cannons: Handel *Chandos Anthem Let God arise* (1717-19)

Cantilena Singers is proud to present the final concert in its 1995 series entitled *Baroque Treasures and Pleasures – Vocal Music for Every Occasion*. During this year we have focussed on the major performance venues of vocal music composed in the 17th and 18th centuries, namely the Chamber, the Court, and the Church. Music in the Baroque era was largely a product of time, place and patronage. *Music for the Church* takes the listener into the chapels, churches and cathedrals of Europe where some of the era's greatest composers worked.

The Basilica of San Marco in Venice was the source of one of the most influential compositional styles in the decades around 1600. Owing to its unique liturgical traditions and a strong sense of civic pride, the church music of Venice was bold, colourful and innovative. Capitalising on the acoustical properties of the multiple domes built in Byzantine style, composers such as the Gabrielis and Monteverdi often created massive and brilliant choral sonorities. *Hodie completi sunt* by Giovanni Gabrieli is typical of the conventional double choir in eight parts – each choir is composed of four parts in the normal SATB disposition. Antiphonal effects dominate the work, which is framed by a brilliant *Alleluia* refrain.

Monteverdi continued the traditions of St Marks when he assumed duties there in 1613 following the death of Gabrieli. An increasing emphasis on variety of scoring is seen in the large body of sacred music he produced during his 30-year tenure. *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* is typical of the smaller madrigal-like works found in his large collection *Selva morale* – a solo group of 5 voices and 2 violins alternate with the full ensemble in chordal style, including a highly expressive setting of the text 'misericordia ejus'. The Venetian style was further developed by numerous German composers, many of whom travelled south on study trips. *Herr, unser Herrscher* by Heinrich Schütz comes from the important collection *Psalmen Davids*, composed after a visit to Italy in 1609-10, during which time he studied with Giovanni Gabrieli. Scored for three choirs (2 vocal and 1 instrumental) with a total of 14 parts, a varied texture is heard in the alternation between single and multiple choirs. Schütz prided himself on successfully adapting Italian techniques into the German language – note the ingenious word setting achieved in the massive refrains, and various passages referring to the elements of nature.

Composers in France in the time of Louis XIV were largely limited in their career opportunities to either achieving a court position, or service at one of the Parisian churches. The monopolistic hierarchy ensured that the talented theatrical composer Marc-Antoine Charpentier did not attain an important post at Versailles. It is largely due to the strong musical traditions of the churches of St Louis and Sainte-Chapelle that the composer was able to fully develop his talent for vocal writing. Of his enormous output of liturgical music, *Venite ad me* is one of few such works to have been published to date. The use of strings in combination with five-part chorus and soloists indicates the festive atmosphere of a *grand motet*, though the style of vocal writing indicates a more intimate setting inspired by the personal nature of the text.

During his tenure at Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach was required to provide a large amount of new music for both regular services and special occasions. The motet *Jesu, meine Freude*, was probably composed for the memorial service for Johanna Maria Kees in July 1723, that is within two months of his induction at the Thomaskirche. The work is almost perfectly symmetrical in layout, a procedure Bach adopted many times in his sacred works. Its eleven movements alternate settings of the chorale stanzas with other music based on related texts from Scripture. The plan can be summarised as follows:

Vers I	Chorus	Vers II	Trio	Vers III	Fugue	Vers IV	Trio	Vers V	Chorus	Vers VI
SATB	SSATB	SSATB	SSA	SSATB	SSATB	SATB	ATB	SSAT	SSATB	SATB

The music for Verses I and VI is identical, while that of the first and last choruses is nearly so. The central fugue is surrounded by chorale verses in which the original melody is greatly disguised, and these are in turn framed by trio movements for high and low voices respectively. While *Jesu, meine Freude* may not feature the antiphonal dialogue character of several other of Bach's motets for double choir, it nevertheless possesses a high degree of textural variety, and ingenuity in the treatment of a familiar chorale tune.

The musical situation in late 17th century England was coloured by the recent political and dynastic upheavals which had directly affected many of its composers' careers. In terms of church music, however, the typically English form of

the verse anthem had survived virtually unchallenged since its inception in late Elizabethan times. For more than a century, this genre was the chief form of Protestant church music, as it suited the requirements of both cathedrals, smaller churches and 'private' establishments such as the Royal Chapel where Henry Purcell worked from 1682. The Baroque style had brought to the verse anthem a greater variety of texture and instrumentation, chiefly in the form of the basso continuo. However, the alternation between the group of solo voices (*verse*) and the full ensemble continued to be a basic feature of the genre, as it had one hundred years earlier in the works of Byrd and Gibbons. In *Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem*, the solo sections are brief, alternating with passages for five-part choir and/or string ensemble in four parts. Purcell's liking for harmonic surprises is seen in the opening prelude, while his skill at setting English is apparent in the vocal writing, particularly the truncated opening phrases.

Soon after George Frideric Handel settled permanently in England, he appears to have worked almost exclusively for the Duke of Chandos during the period 1717-20. His major output for the Duke's establishment was in the form of 11 anthems, a Te Deum and the masque *Acis and Galatea*. The *Chandos anthems* are therefore amongst Handel's first attempts at setting the English language, which he further ennobled in the oratorios composed at the height of his fame. *Let God arise* is scored for strings (without violas) and oboe, and a four-part chorus and soloists. Unlike the anthems of earlier composers, Handel here enlarges the solos to the status of independent arias, and the choruses to large contrapuntal movements with occasional hints of theatricality – not the settings of *scatter'd his enemies* in the first chorus, and the rather prophetic *Alleluia* that concludes the work.

No.12 - Johann Sebastian Bach *A programme of his Early Cantatas, 2 March 1997*

Nach dir, Herr, verlangst mich BWV 150

Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir BWV 131

Himmelskönig, sei willkommen BWV 182

Cantilena Singers is proud to present this concert of some of the finest cantatas composed by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) during his 'early' years. Their collective designation as early works belies the maturity and skill shown by the composer before his thirtieth year. The cantatas composed prior to 1723 were written in commemoration of special occasions, rather than on a weekly basis. In fact, the term *cantata* is somewhat of an anachronism as the composer preferred the more generic designation *Kirchenstück* (literally "church piece").

Prior to his appointment as Kantor of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig in 1723, Bach was not known primarily as a composer of fine sacred vocal music. Typical of the career of many baroque musicians, the composer's output reflects the local resources of the positions held at any particular time. The small towns of Arnstadt and Mühlhausen did not have musical resources comparable to Leipzig (with its five churches, choir school and professional town musicians), but this did not prevent Bach from composing some fine works when opportunities arose. Even at the musically well-equipped court of Weimar, Bach composed cantatas only from 1714 onwards, when he was promoted to the position of *Konzertmeister*. It is therefore not surprising then that before 1723, Bach had only composed some two dozen cantatas. While one might marvel at his total output of 300 such works, other composers wrote many more, such as Telemann who produced about 1200 cantatas!

Each of the works on today's programme is a unique creation in terms of its structure and texture. Bach was yet to fully incorporate contemporary Italianate styles of composition, instead relying heavily on north German traditions of chorale setting in both solos and choruses. Rather than following the pattern adopted in his later works (ie. large chorus - recitatives and arias - short concluding chorale), Bach's early cantatas exhibit great textural richness and variety of text setting.

Nach dir, Herr, verlangst mich: This is believed to be Bach's earliest extant church cantata, composed in Arnstadt around 1707. Though scored modestly for two violins and bass instruments and four vocal parts, the emotional intensity of Psalm 25 is portrayed with great insight. The 'longing' of the opening lines of text is portrayed by interweaving chromatic lines, while the plea 'lead me' in the second chorus is set as a long scale ascending almost four octaves from the basses to the first violin. Solo writing is limited to a brief soprano aria with obbligato violin, and a trio for lower voices which is accompanied by an uncharacteristically busy continuo line. The climax of the work is an expressive chaconne (*Ciaccona*) in which the chorus, solo voices and instruments alternate and combine over an insistent bass pattern. More than one hundred years later, this movement made a strong impact on the composer Brahms who used it as a model for the last movement of his Fourth Symphony.

Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir: Soon after Bach's arrival in Mühlhausen in 1707, a tragic fire destroyed a large section of the town including the parish of St Blasius where he was organist. On the request of Georg Christian Elmer, the pastor of St Mary's, Bach wrote this cantata for a service of civic mourning. Skilfully combining the text of Psalm 130 with two stanzas of a well-known chorale, Bach used the techniques of superimposition and juxtaposition. This technique also features strongly in his mature Passion settings. Throughout the two extended arias, the chorale is intoned in the treble voices, thus mingling the personal with the collective statements of faith. The intertwining lines of the solo oboe and violin over a dense string texture create masterly harmonic and instrumental colours which enhance the choruses. This cantata, in terms of overall structure, is built on a symmetrical plan similar to many other masterpieces by Bach. Note the balance of textures and movement types:

Chorus	Aria	Chorus	Aria	Chorus
Adagio introduction	Solo bass	Adagio introduction	Solo tenor	Adagio introduction
Vivace choral fugue	Chorale (soprano)	Largo choral fugue	Chorale (alto)	Allegro choral fugue
_____		_____		

Himmelskönig, sei willkommen: This cantata was first performed on Palm Sunday March 25, 1714. It is therefore the first vocal work composed after Bach's promotion as *Konzertmeister*. The festive character associated with the liturgical symbolism of Christ's entry into Jerusalem is heard in the brilliant choral writing. Bach's incorporation of contemporary Italianate styles is seen in the Da Capo form of the three arias and the outer choruses. In addition Bach continues to use typical north German features in the pervasive use of fugal styles and the motet-like setting of the Passiontide chorale *Jesu, deine Passion*. The instrumentation is unique in Bach's output - solo recorder and violin

supported by a four part consort of low strings. The version being performed today includes the revisions Bach made to this work when he revived it during the 1720s. Similarly to Cantata 131, a symmetrical layout is discernible:

Chorus	Recitative	Bass Aria	Alto Aria	Tenor Aria	Chorus	Chorus
Da Capo form	Arioso	Modified Da Capo	Da Capo form	Modified Da Capo	Chorale motet	Da Capo form
Free text	Biblical text	Free text	Free text	Free text	Chorale text	Free text

No.13 - From the Court of the Sun-King, 7 October 1997

Charpentier *Te Deum* H.146

F.Couperin *Concert Royaux No.2 in D major*

Lully Selections from *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*

Lalande *Les Fontaines de Versailles*

Cantilena Singers is proud to present the opening concert of the 1997 Brisbane Early Music Festival with a programme that encapsulates both the grandeur and the charm of the Baroque. By focusing on the single location of the French court at the time of *Le Roi Soleil* - Louis XIV (reg. 1643-1715), the audience has the opportunity to experience some of the richest musical delights of this very special era. The four composers represented on tonight's programme are amongst the most significant artists to have worked during the reign of the *Sun-King*. Jean-Baptiste Lully was the chief theatrical composer at Versailles, while Michel-Richard de Lalande held an equivalent post in the Chapelle Royale. Best known for his sacred music, Marc-Antoine Charpentier never held a court position, but was recognised by the King and other members of the royal family who supported him with a pension and occasional commissions. François Couperin was the major figure of the younger generation of composers who worked during the final years of Louis XIV's reign, at a time when chamber music was more in vogue than was ceremonial splendour.

Each of these four composers had contact with one or more of the others, either through their official duties or through unofficial intrigues at court. Lully and Charpentier both wrote theatrical music to Molière's texts in the 1670s, but under rather different circumstances. While Lully held a virtual monopoly on stage music, he was determined that no other musicians could summon the resources to rival him. Thus Charpentier's obvious theatrical gifts were stifled and his career was spent primarily in Parisian churches after he failed to gain a post at Versailles in 1683. In that year, the young Lalande was successful in winning a court position, possibly due to the support of an anti-Lully faction at Versailles. It appears that Charpentier may have worked alongside Lalande at the Jesuit College in Paris at one stage in the 1680s, while both composers wrote numerous works in the style of the grand motet. Couperin's career parallels that of Charpentier in that much of his sacred music was written for Parisian churches, and despite official opposition, they both cultivated a strong interest in the Italian style. Couperin also worked alongside Lalande at the court chapel from the 1690s, and though he was obviously qualified to take up one of the several posts that later fell vacant, Lalande eventually took over complete control of this institution by acquiring the duties of other persons as they retired from office. In so doing he reflected the strategic skill that his earlier rival Lully had shown in the field of theatrical music.

In an age where the Sun-King reigned absolutely, some of his favoured musicians were similarly adept in gaining control of their respective artistic empires! Thus while much music was composed during his reign, very little of it was preserved through publication and performance after his death. With modern research, it is now possible for audiences and musicians to reassess in hindsight the relative worth of France's baroque composers, irrespective of their status, official titles, and degree of prominence at the court of Versailles. The works on this programme are representative of the major genres cultivated at Versailles. Furthermore, their dates of composition are evenly spaced throughout Louis' long reign. From 1670 comes Lully's incidental music to the Comédie-ballet *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, while Lalande's *Le Fontaines de Versailles* of 1683 might be termed a Divertissement or Concert as it was not intended to be fully staged. Charpentier's well-known *Te Deum* dates from the mid-1690s and is composed in the form of a Grand Motet for large vocal-orchestral forces. Finally, Couperin's series of chamber sonatas entitled *Concerts royaux* date from the early 1700s, as they were performed for the King in 1714-15, at the very end of his life. *From the Court of the Sun-King* thus presents a varied and colourful collage of highlights from one of the most brilliant periods of French music.

Settings of the liturgical *Te Deum* text were common in Louis XIV's reign as the preferred genre of ceremonial sacred music. Celebrations of royal weddings, births and battle victories and similar events were often accompanied by a new setting by one of the court composers. Charpentier however, never held a court post, and so the date and therefore the occasion which inspired his *Te Deum in D* (H.146) is uncertain. One possibility is the French victory at Steinkerque by the Maréchale de Luxembourg in August 1692. At that time, although Charpentier was engaged at the Jesuit College in Paris, he would have been fully aware of the courtly style which demanded trumpets and timpani for such an occasion. What is of more interest however are the subtle colours which he evokes from the solo flutes and violins in some of the solo vocal sections. Significantly, Charpentier once listed various keys he might use and his understanding of their respective moods - the use of D major (well suited to trumpets as shown in the full ensemble sections of this work) is 'joyous and very warlike', while e minor (the key of the soprano solo with solo flutes) is 'effeminate, amorous and plaintive' and G major (the key of the soprano-bass duet) is 'quietly joyful'. The instrumental writing is generally in four parts, but with a single treble *dessus* line for the violins and winds, divided violas, and *Basse continue*.

The fanfare which opens this work is one of the most frequently played excerpts from any single Baroque work. Soon after the work was recorded for the first time in 1953 it was adopted as the Eurovision theme, and has since been chosen as the signature tune for several radio and television programmes. The full fanfare is composed as a *Rondeau*, with the trumpet tune recurring at regular intervals after each of two couplets. Thereafter, the work follows the familiar pattern of the *grand motet* - vocal solos and ensembles alternating with large choral sections. The trumpet style returns at significant points of the text - 'Heaven and earth are full of your glory', 'Overcoming the sharpness of death', 'In Thee O Lord have I trusted' - each of these brings connotations of regal or divine splendour and strength. Throughout these full sections, passages by the *grand chœur* (full ensemble) alternate with those of the *petit chœur* (the solo ensemble from within the chorus comprising 4-8 singers). The sections which are given over solely to soloists

feature considerable variety of scoring, from solo voice and continuo to vocal trio with up to four solo instruments. This work thus demonstrates an unprecedented amount of care taken with such details. Furthermore, it is obvious that Charpentier intended the work to proceed without large pauses, an argument supported by the tempo relationships that are implied by the time signatures he employs. These and other points of interpretation (including the use of a French accent in the Latin pronunciation) are based on the findings contained in the excellent new performing score which is being used for tonight's performance. This version published by Faber in 1996 was edited by Lionel Sawkins, an Australian scholar now resident in England.

Like Charpentier (who studied in Rome with Carissimi during his apprentice years), François Couperin 'Le Grand' was receptive to Italianate influences in terms of style and genres. In fact, he was the one of the first major composers working in France around 1700 to adopt the chamber trio sonata genre. His larger chamber works entitled *Apotheosis* make explicit but diplomatic references to his hoped-for union of national styles, of which Lully (French) and Corelli (Italian) were the most famed exponents. In similar vein, Couperin composed a series of *Concerts Royaux* which appeared in print in 1722 together with his *Troisième Livre de Pièces de Clavecin*. However, they date from at least a decade earlier, as they were composed for the ailing king and were thus performed at the *petits concerts de chambre* in 1714 and 1715. In such a setting, Couperin would have been able to call on the talents of the finest court chamber musicians for these performances. Couperin was already a familiar figure at Versailles, having worked as one of the court organists from 1693 onwards.

The refined elegance, and at times introverted melancholy of Couperin's keyboard works is also present to a certain degree in these chamber works. The composer recommends that they may be performed by a variety of instrumental combinations. Being published on two staves, they could be heard a harpsichord solo, or by basso continuo with the upper part given to 'violin, flute, oboe, viola da gamba, and bassoon'. A further possibility is that they might be performed as concerted works with a larger ensemble performing the *Prélude* and various soloists in the remaining movements. The *Second Concert* does not commence with the either a grand French *Ouverture* style or the serious *Grave* style found in many of Corelli's church sonatas. Instead, a *Prélude gracieusement* announces that the prevailing mood is to be one of intimacy and delicacy. However, twice Couperin makes a diversion into the world of counterpoint, a technique used to great effect by both Lully and Corelli. The *Allemande Fugée* and *Air Contre fugué* provide a degree of bass line activity at various points where the treble instrument enters unaccompanied to be followed soon afterward by the continuo parts in imitation. The work concludes with an *Échos tendrement* in the style of a *Rondeau*, which features the gamba as an independent melodic voice in parallel with the treble part. The 'echo' is signified throughout by *fort* (loud) and *doux* (soft) markings. The centrepiece of the entire work is a charming *Air tendre* in the minor mode.

French drama, dance and music have always co-existed on the basis that textual declamation is of prime importance, and that musical gestures are frequently inspired by physical movement. When all three modes of expression exist within in a single work, the result is a uniquely French synthesis of the arts. Thus a *Comédie-ballet* is at once a play, a ballet, and a mini-opera, with vocal and instrumental forces participating in various combinations and guises. Solos, arias, choruses and instrumental movements are frequently cast in the style of a dance, while much of the vocal writing is based on the premise that the textual declamation should not be over-ridden by purely musical concerns. Spoken text co-exists with sung forms, and rarely was an instrumental movement merely played without some action or choreography. Lully contributed to the early success of the *comédie-ballet*, until it became obvious that the King and the court preferred the fully-sung form of opera. Thus having collaborated intensively with Corneille and Molière in the 1660s, Lully was quick to discard his interest with this sphere of activity and throw in his artistic lot with the newly created genre of the *Tragédie lyrique*. His final *comédie-ballet* was *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, which was first performed in 1670. Within two years Lully had obtained the patents for major theatrical productions, casting aside Molière and his talented troupe which later became known as the *Comédie Française*.

The trend towards the domination of sung text over the spoken form was already evident in *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* however, wherein the six *Entrées* composed by Lully were 'accompanied' by the *comédie* by Molière, as noted in a contemporary review of the work. It is therefore possible to appreciate the musical elements without a full knowledge of the play, although the humorous plot is certainly worthy of interest. After the protagonist various attempts to acquire the trappings of being a *gentilhomme*, the work concludes with a *Ballet des Nations*, with a series of *Entrées* devoted to various countries. Tonight's performance features excerpts from the Italian and French portions, hence the rather unusual inclusion of a foreign language. The *bel canto* style is caricatured in the duet between the 'Musicien Italien and Musicienne Italienne', with its lilting phrases and florid vocal style. In contrast, the duet of the two 'Poitevins' exhibits the characteristic syllabic setting of the French style, who sing in the style of a Menuet. Framing these solos are an *Ouverture* and two simple choruses which reflect on the exotic spectacles that accompany the conclusion of the play.

The Palace of Versailles has long been recognised as a marvel of architecture and landscaping. Since its establishment in the late seventeenth century. Its visual appeal is due to Lenôtre's grand scheme of gardens which surround the palace complex. These open spaces were often chosen as the venue for outdoor performances, with the spectacular effect of fireworks being reflected in the various large pools adorned with impressive fountains. The construction of the canals which channelled the water to make all this possible was without doubt one of the major engineering achievements of the era. This visual spectacle which in part reflected the magnificence of the Sun-King has been immortalised in the music of Lalande, whose *Les Fontaines de Versailles* was first heard at court in 1683. While Lalande is best known today for his sacred music, it was his early secular works which ensured his rapid entrée into court circles.

No.14 - *Passions music – Music for Holy Week, 5 April 1998*

Tunder *Hosianna dem Sohne David*

Zelenka responsaries – *In monte Oliveti, O vos omnes, Sepulto Domino*

Charpentier *Le Reniement de St Pierre*

Caldara *Stabat Mater a16* and *Crucifixus*

Schütz *Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz* SWV 478 and *Surrexit pastor bonus* SWV 169

Cantilena Singers is proud to present this programme of sacred music inspired by the Passion of Christ. The tradition of special music for Good Friday has inspired some fine settings of the Passion story. While these works are often monumental in structure, they represent merely the highpoint of what was a rich tradition in the baroque era, particularly in Germany. Composers such as Schütz, Keiser, JS Bach and his son CPE Bach preserved and enriched this custom of providing fine musical interpretations of last days of Christ's life. Telemann was undoubtedly the most prolific, producing such almost fifty such works between 1722 and 1767 in the quasi-operatic style of oratorio which was then in vogue in north Germany. Not all baroque composers chose to set the complete Passion story, however.

Today's programme *Passionsmusik - Music for Holy* comprises a selection of this rich repertoire. The composite result is a rather different type of Passion setting, namely one by various composers rather than a single epic work. There is however still a strong German emphasis, with composers such as Tunder and Schütz, and the Bohemian composer Zelenka, who worked in the Dresden court. An Italian influence is also present, with Charpentier and Caldara. Both of these composers studied in Rome before establishing themselves in France and Austria respectively.

The programme begins with a musical setting of Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, with the joyous cantata *Hosianna dem Sohne David* (Hosanna to the Son of David) by Franz Tunder (1614-1667). This work sets a festive mood with frequent refrains of 'Hosanna'. Following a brief instrumental prelude, the five part chorus, soloists and strings alternate in rapid succession, in the style of a concerto. Tunder is one of the most important early baroque figures in northern Germany. His career focussed on Lübeck, the city which was later to witness the brilliance of Buxtehude. It is a quirk of fate that much of the most richly scored music composed for the churches in Lübeck in the seventeenth century has been preserved not in Germany, but in Sweden. The court Kapellmeister and organist of the German church in Stockholm, Gustav Düben (1624-1690) was a great collector of contemporary manuscripts for his own use. This invaluable resource now resides in the University of Uppsala.

Another next major event in Holy Week is the arrest and trial of Christ, and the various reactions to these events by the disciples. One of the most poignant moments of human frailty is encapsulated in the denial of Christ by Peter, one of the most outspoken of the disciples. In similar vein to Bach's emotive interpretation of this moment in both his Passion settings, the French composer Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1634-1704) makes a feature of this vignette in his short oratorio *Le Reniement de St. Pierre* (The Denial of St Peter). As mentioned above, this composer was Italian trained, and as such was one of the major exponents of the oratorio style of Carissimi, with whom Charpentier probably studied in Rome. In comparison to the large scale works of the later composers such as Handel, the early oratorio is normally quite brief, with a single event being the focus of attention. Based on a conflation of the various gospel accounts of Peter's experiences, the work traces the events from immediately after the Last Supper, to the betrayal of Judas and arrest of Christ. The essence of the drama occurs when Peter is challenged by several persons in the palace of the high priest, culminating in the denial. Charpentier reserves his most expressive writing for this moment, with a concluding chorus of great intensity and beauty.

The events surrounding the crucifixion itself are portrayed in two brief works by Antonio Caldara (1670-1736), an Italian who spent most of his career at the court in Vienna. His short *Stabat Mater* is a gem of simplicity, while the 16-part *Crucifixus* is quite imposing in structure. Both works are full of expressive harmonic touches, but the richness of the latter work is sure to be a highlight of this programme. Interspersed at various points in this concert are several short Responsaries for Holy Week by the Bohemian composer Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745). These selections are from a complete set of twenty seven musical lessons, one set of nine composed for each of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Saturday before Easter. In traditional style, quotes from the book of Lamentations, the penitential Psalms, Isaiah, and the Passion account of St Matthew provide reflective texts. Zelenka's skill at counterpoint, as well as his sensitivity to textual inflections, are evident in these miniature motets.

The major item in the second half of the concert is *Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz* (The Seven Last Words of Jesus Christ from the Cross) by Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672). This work could be described either as an oratorio or dramatic cantata, as it introduces named characters and direct quotations from the various biblical accounts. The central character of Christ is presented by a baritone voice, while the role of narrator or 'Evangelist' is shared between various soloists and ensembles. As a corollary to Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, each of the quotations of Christ's words are

accompanied by a group of strings, which commentators usually describe as a 'musical halo'. The full ensemble of five part chorus and five part strings frames the work with two impressive choral movements.

The programme is brought to a joyous conclusion with another work by Schütz, the Easter motet *Surrexit pastor bonus* (The good shepherd has risen). This brief work is brilliantly scored for four choirs, namely one of instruments, two each of four part mixed voices, and a solo ensemble of six voices - 20 parts in all. In similar vein to the work which commenced the concert, the celebratory refrain of 'Alleluia' rings out at various points.

This programme thus traces the major events which are commemorated within the week between Palm Sunday and Easter. Each individual work is a very significant commentary on some event or aspect of Holy Week. The total effect is intended to be a very special musical and meditative experience. Cantilena Singers, directed by Peter Roennfeldt, and in collaboration with the Badinerie Players, looks forward to continuing this tradition of presenting fine music for Passiontide both today and in the future.

No.15 – *Psalms, Sonnets and Songs*, 27 September 1998

Byrd *Come let us rejoice* and *Retire my soul* (*Psalms, sonnets and songs* 1611), *Ambitious love hath forc'd me to aspire* and *Awake, sweet love* (*Psalms, sonnets and songs* 1588)
Purcell *O all ye peoples, clap your hands* Z.138
Schütz *Es steh Gott auf* SWV 356 (*Symphoniae Sacrae II*, 1647)
Pachelbel *Der Herr ist König*
Monteverdi *Dixit Dominus a10*
Lawes *Happy youth, that shalt possess*
Monteverdi *Zefiro torna* (*Scherzi musicali* 1632) and *Ardo avvampo* (Book VIII madrigals 1638)
Charpentier *Magnificat in F* H.77
Schütz *Nunc dimittis* from *Musikalisches Exequien* SWV 281
Dowland *Oh what hath overwrought* (*Third and last booke of songs or ayres* 1603)
Kreiger *An die Einsamkeit* and *Sommerfreuden* (*Auserlesne Arien* 1690)
Blow *Sing ye muses* (*Amphion Anglicus* 1700)

Cantilena Singers is proud to present its final program for 1998. Entitled *Psalms, Sonnets and Songs*, this concert pays homage to William Byrd, who published two volumes of vocal music under this title in 1588 and 1611. From the perspective of the rich culture of the late Elizabethan era, Byrd's output is remarkable for both innovation and refinement. Hence one finds classic examples of the motet or anthem alongside some highly original secular forms. By juxtaposing this composer with his contemporaries and compatriots, this program of sacred and secular vocal music of the seventeenth century demonstrates how much the baroque style was indebted to the Renaissance. Particularly in England, the tradition of the Renaissance madrigal, partsong and anthem survived well into the Baroque era. Similarly in Italy and Germany the madrigal and motet survived and transformed by composers such as Monteverdi and Schütz.

Psalms from the Old Testament have been a source of inspiration for composers of all eras. The poetic flow of the texts and the brilliance of their imagery have inspired works on a grand scale as well as many more intimate settings. The Renaissance motet lent itself very well to psalm settings, as each line of text could be provided with its own melodic figure which is then imitated by all voice parts. Byrd's short anthem *Come let us rejoice* is a fine example of this approach, with words such as 'joy' and 'rejoice' featured prominently with florid passages. Later in the seventeenth century, English composers were still working along similar lines, as seen in Purcell's *O all ye people* with its word painting of 'cheerful noise' and 'trumpets proclaim your joy'.

Baroque composers also enjoyed building massive effects by featuring competing forces within a single work. The so-called Venetian style is evident in Monteverdi's ten-part *Dixit Dominus* where voices and violins are heard in pairs, quartets and also as a rich block of sound. In similar vein, Pachelbel's motet *Der Herr ist König* pits two four-part choirs against each other, cadencing at regular intervals with the full body of sound. During the 30 Years' War (1618-48) the institutions which supported richly scored church music experienced dislocation. The more ingenious composers such as Schütz adapted their focus to writing for smaller ensembles, as seen in the motet *Es steh Gott auf* for two solo voices, two violins and continuo. Of particular interest is the lilting bass line figure which occurs where the text turns from references to God's vengeance to that of rejoicing.

Sonnets as a poetic form have appealed to composers since the Renaissance. Its fourteen-line structure with distinctive rhyme schemes has endless possibilities for text setting. In particular, the mid-point change from four-line to three-line stanzas provides an opportunity for changes of texture and mood. This is clearly seen in Monteverdi's madrigal *Ardo avvampo*, where after relentless accents of the strong beats in triple time, the reference to 'a beautiful pair of eyes' causes a significant change of style. Similarly, in *Zefiro torna*, the final stanza 'only I am alone' causes an abrupt halt to the otherwise unyielding two-bar bass pattern which is heard more than sixty times. English madrigal composers had not only adopted the musical style of the Renaissance madrigal, but also the poetic forms that inspired it.

During this period in England, there was available a large store of sonnets and other poetic genres. Byrd's *Ambitious love* is a restrained setting of an anonymous sonnet, with interweaving of parts in the style of a viol consort. In contrast, Dowland's gentle partsong *Awake sweet love* is more focussed on the treble melody. The poetic form here has also been reversed, with two sets of three-line stanzas followed by two four-line stanzas. Henry Lawes was very well known for his airs. The great English writer John Milton even wrote a sonnet in his honour. The English penchant for quirkiness can be seen in *Happy youth* where although the poetic rhyme scheme is very clear, the musical phrases elide and elude such strictures.

Songs are found in many diverse musical genres from all eras and cultures. In seventeenth century Europe, however, the concept of solo vocal music composed with a focus on melody, setting of a refined text and simple instrumental accompaniment was considered a novelty. Byrd included in his publications a range of song-like works, both secular

and sacred in orientation. For instance, *Retire my soul* is a contemplative and penitential partsong, with a subtle interweaving of parts on phrases such as 'how follies grow' and 'they days will seem but dreams'.

Today's program also features settings of the most loved biblical songs or Canticles, namely the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. These poetic utterances (from the mouths of Mary and Simeon respectively) are prominent in the liturgies of both the daily Offices of the Catholic church and the Vespers service in the English and German Protestant traditions. Charpentier was active for most of his career as a church musician in Paris. He left behind a vast amount of fine repertoire that has since been neglected and rarely published. For this performance, Peter Roennfeldt has prepared his own performance edition of this composer's *Magnificat in F* from original sources. Throughout this work, a solo vocal group (petit chœur) is heard in opposition to the full ensemble, while dance-like rhythms pervade the mood and musical style. Word painting is limited to a few remarkable instances such as the phrase 'the rich are sent empty away' where the voices 'vanish' on rising scales. Schütz adapted the *Nunc Dimittis* by combining it with the final text of his German Requiem, or *Musikalisches Exequien*. This movement cleverly combines Simeon's works of resignation with a setting of the words 'blessed are the dead', set for a semi-chorus of seraphims, to be sung 'as from a distance'.

The secular works that conclude this program are somewhat loosely connected to the genre of song. Byrd's *Awake mine eyes* is virtually a madrigal, with interplay of parts, and word painting on phrases such as 'descending'. Dowland's *O what hath overwrought* is a partsong, with clear soprano melody and block harmonies throughout, though with some brief moments of poignancy. Johann Philipp Krieger was known for his prolific output of cantatas as well as several collections of arias composed for solo voice and continuo accompaniment. The airs *An die Einsamkeit* and *Sommerfreuden* are both characteristic examples of these anthologies, with charming melodic contours. John Blow's *Sing ye Muses* was first performed at an 'Entertainment of Musick in York Buildings', and was later published as the festive epilogue to his song collection *Amphion Anglicus*. This joyous work is an exhortation to the Muses to brighten the human experience with Music and Beauty.

No.16 - When in Rome – Baroque sacred music from the Eternal City, 28 May 1999

A.Scarlatti *Domine refugium, O magnum mysterium, Est dies trophei*

Carissimi *Jonah*

Handel *Dixit Dominus*

Rome was a major cultural as well as religious centre during the 17th century. The artistic patronage provided by various religious institutions and wealthy individuals based there was an attraction for many of Europe's finest composers and performers.

Alessandro Scarlatti is best known for operas and secular cantatas. His early years were however largely spent in Rome, where he became familiar with sacred music styles. Supported at various times by Queen Christina of Sweden, the Cardinals Pamphili and Ottoboni and Prince Ruspoli, Scarlatti had ample resources and performance opportunities. The motets being performed tonight include works in the *a cappella* style: *Domine refugium* and *O magnum mysterium* for double choir. In contrast, *Est dies trophei* shows the concertante style of the late baroque, with participation of a string ensemble and vocal quartet in contrast to and in dialogue with the chorus.

Giacomo Carissimi was based in Rome for nearly all of his life, with a longstanding role as *maestro de cappella* of the German (Jesuit) College. His duties included teaching as well as provision of church music for St Apollinare. He also provided works for the Oratorio del St Croficciso. His oratorios are much shorter than those by later composers (eg Handel), but their dramatic impetus and emotional impact are no less remarkable. *Jonah* is scored for double choir, a variety of soloists in the role of *Historicus* (narrator), the voices of God and the protagonist Jonah. The more memorable scenes included the storm at sea and the plaintive lament and prayer of Jonah. This performance is possibly the local premiere of this work.

George Frideric Handel is better known for the oratorios and operas he composed in England than his early works composed in Germany and during his Italian sojourn. In the summer of 1707, Handel was commissioned for Vespers music for the Carmelites, of which his *Dixit Dominus* setting is the best known. The orchestral brilliance of Corelli is evident throughout, thus accounting for the extreme virtuosity required of the chorus. Expressiveness is also evident in the arias and the duet 'De torrente'. In addition to these features is a sense of tradition, with the 'cantus firmus' quotation of plainsong and strict counterpoint, particularly in the 'Gloria'. Word-painting is also evident, such as in the 'conquassabit' (He shall crush) chorus with its hammering accents. Overall, this is a work of great exhilaration: a supreme challenge for performers and a thrilling experience for the listener.