Program notes by Peter Roennfeldt – *Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra Best of Baroque Series* 1995-2000

What is this thing called Baroque?

Musicians regularly borrow terms from the visual arts to describe major stylistic movements - for example *Renaissance*, *Classicism, Romanticism, Impressionism*. Similarly, the term *Baroque* has become a convenient single term for the music of a major era, namely c.1600-c1750. Originally used in the mid-18th century, it derives from the Portuguese word *barocco* describing a misshapen pearl. *Baroque* was therefore originally a derogatory description of a style that had become, to some contemporary listeners, too ornate and complex. Despite this rather dubious origin, the term has acquired general usage, even though the musical style of this long era is anything but uniform. On closer investigation, one might question whether the music of composers such as Monteverdi, Purcell, Rameau and Bach displays more contrast than similarity - modern practice denotes them all as *Baroque*.

The Baroque was an era when great "schools" of composers developed within certain nations, primarily Italy, France, England and Germany. Each developed its own musical forms, performance practices and traditions, with varying degrees of awareness or interest in outside developments. One might describe JS Bach as the pinnacle of the *German* style, but in fact, he owed his stylistic parentage to Vivaldi and Couperin just as much as his own cultural origins.

Despite the existence of local idioms which denies the notion of uniformity within the Baroque, it is possible to define a few common features which transcend national boundaries. To begin with, almost all Baroque music requires the *basso continuo*, which might include a keyboard instrument or lute to provide the harmonic "filling-in" (which is largely improvised by the performer), and a bass line provided by a cello or bassoon. Secondly, most Baroque music (particularly later composers such as Handel and JS Bach) features a single mood or *affection* within any movement of a larger work. Thus on hearing the first bars of a Vivaldi concerto, for instance, one can expect that the rhythm and mood will remain consistent until the end of the movement. Finally, much of Baroque music requires *ornamentation* on the part of the performer to appropriately express the composer's intentions. Rarely was every last detail notated on the score - performers were, and are, expected to participate in the act of creation, and therefore embellish what is often merely written down in shorthand.

Best of Baroque brings you, the listener a selection of the kaleidoscope that is Baroque music. In addition to familiar figures such as JS Bach, Handel, Telemann, Purcell, Vivaldi and Pergolesi, some of the lesser known composers will be heard - Tartini, CPE Bach, Torelli and Rebel. A varied mix of music for the stage, the church, the concert hall, and the outdoors is being presented - further, a variety of textures from full orchestra and choir to solo instruments and voice. A few surprises are in store for the discerning listener - concertos and orchestral suites that depict, in sound, the elements of nature, and figures from mythology - the Baroque is anything but predictable!

[A Glossary of frequently used terms relating to Baroque music is included below]

Series 1, 1995 - Concert No.1, 22 April

JS Bach – Orchestral Suite in C BWV 1066
Handel – Music for the Royal Fireworks
Tartini – Violin concerto in D minor
CPE Bach – Oboe concerto in E-flat

This programme features the most popular instrumental forms of the Baroque, the *concerto* and the *suite*, as well as the two great contemporary masters Handel and JS Bach, the latter in company with his most famous son. While the concerto was an Italian creation full of vital motoric rhythms and often virtuoso solo writing, the suite was a French / German genre that emphasised the refinement of the stylised dance and the varied colours possible within the full orchestra.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) composed his four Orchestral Suites not as a set (such as the *Brandenburg* Concertos), but over a twenty year period. The *Orchestral Suite in C BWV 1066* dates from Bach's tenure in Cöthen (1717-23), a time when he was primarily involved with instrumental composition. Bach had already begun to explore the potential of the suite as a keyboard genre with a pronounced French influence, and so in this orchestral work he adopts a similar viewpoint. In fact, the four orchestral suites were designated *Ouverture* owing to their grand first movements. The *Ouverture* was developed in the court of Louis XIV as the introduction to an opera or ballet, and normally consists of a stately opening full of strongly dotted rhythms followed by a faster passage in fugal style. Bach observes all of these conventions, adding a touch of colour contrast in the solo passages for the two oboes and bassoon. Each of the dances that follows is also unmistakably French in derivation. Of interest is the preponderance of "optional" dances - only the Courante remains from the standard layout of suite movements. The Gavotte, Menuet, Bourrée, Passepied and Forlane are not unheard of in Bach's suites, but rarely do they appear together in such a combination as this, which emphasises their fast tempos, sprung rhythms and light textures.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) was a man of the stage in its widest context - rarely did he write anything that would not impress at first hearing. His success both in Italy and England was due to the fact that he could at short notice create a musical work for a specific occasion. Frequently he compromised to satisfy the demands of his patrons. The *Music for the Royal Fireworks* was such a creation - inspired by a political event and requested by a monarch with whom Handel was well acquainted. In commissioning a work to celebrate the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1749 (on conclusion of the War of the Austrian Succession), George II asked for "as many martial instruments as possible .... and hoped that there would be no fidles [sic]". The production took on epic proportions, complete with a public rehearsal in Vauxhall Gardens and a specially designed stage in Green Park where the celebratory (albeit malfunctioning) fireworks display took place. The original score contains some unusual details - 3 parts for each of trumpets, horns and oboes with indications for multiple players on each line, with string parts that essentially double the winds. In terms of layout, the *Royal Fireworks Music* is similar to the Bach Suite discussed above. Opening with a large overture-like movement, there follows a series of French dances, including a *Siciliana* subtitled *La Paix* (the peace) obviously in deference to the occasion being celebrated. Despite its genesis as an outdoor occasional work, the *Royal Fireworks Music* is eminently suited to the concert hall, though usually now performed in this setting with a reduced number of wind and brass players.

Guiseppe Tartini (1692-1770) represents the summit of Italian violin playing in the late Baroque. Continuing along the virtuoso path set by Torelli and Vivaldi, Tartini brought the skill of the soloist to the composition to his many concertos and sonatas. His role as both theorist and teacher is also significant - his treatise *Trattato di musica* of 1754 stands alongside the many other great volumes devoted to aspects of instrumental performance from the mid-18th century. Superficially, Tartini's *Violin Concerto in D minor* is typical of the form developed by Vivaldi, comprising three movements in a Fast-Slow-Fast sequence. However, a closer inspection reveals elements of style that place it well within the *Rococo* period - more regularly phrased melodies, simpler accompaniment textures, and less of the driving rhythms that were typical of the late Baroque Italian concerto. On the other hand, all elements of performance technique are exploited to the limit, creating a high level of energy.

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-88) like his slightly older contemporary Tartini, represents one of the most important changes of direction that took place in music from the 1740s onwards. As the natural heir to his father's command of late Baroque techniques of composition, CPE Bach however chose a slightly different path. While resident in Berlin (1738-67), he created a distinctive musical dialect known as *Empfindsamkeit,* meaning literally 'the state of being full of feeling'. This style developed the art of nuance to an unprecedented degree, and developed a unique musical language which reached its height in his solo keyboard works. While harpsichordist to the court of Frederick the Great, CPE was frequently called upon to perform in a more 'public' role, which is best seen in his orchestral works. The *Oboe Concerto in E-flat* is one of a group of works dating from the 1760s that appear in two authentic versions including the

composer's own arrangement for solo keyboard. According to Carl Ludwig Matthes, (a prominent oboist living in Berlin at the time), it appears that the oboe version came first. This view can be supported by the typically profound expression given to the solo instrument in the slow movement. For the outer movements, CPE Bach relies on the *ritornello* technique of the late Baroque, rather than the style being adopted by his younger brother Johann Christian (who in turn was a major influence on the young Mozart). CPE Bach has suffered one of the common misfortunes of musical history in that he is often seen as a mere 'forerunner' of a style that reached its pinnacle much later. In fact, he matured and developed throughout his long career, his younger contemporary Mozart outlived him by merely three years.

Series 1, 1995 - Concert No.2, 6 May

Handel – Overture and symphonies from Jephta
Torelli – Trumpet concerto in D
Telemann – Water music TWV 55:C3
JS Bach – Magnificat in D BWV 243

The second programme features the role of text and sub-text which was prominent in much of Baroque music. In an age dominated by the voice, it was natural that many composers were inspired by the possibilities of text setting. Bach and Handel were both noted for their vocal works composed for spiritual purposes - the *Magnificat* being one of the most frequently set liturgical texts. The oratorio, usually based on Biblical stories, was one of the novelties of the Baroque, in effect the sacred equivalent to *opera*. To complete the programme, a solo *concerto*, and an orchestral *suite* based on characters from classical mythology.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) was inherently a theatrical composer, so it is no surprise that he found an avenue for his talents in Italian opera, despite his German background. After initial successes in this genre in Italy, he settled in England. Here for a time his operas were much admired. Due to a series of financial difficulties and collegial rivalries in the operatic world, the ever-resourceful composer turned to the oratorio in which he continued to manifest a talent for musical drama. Jephtha was to be Handel's last such work, completed in 1752 under severe personal hardship owing to his increasing blindness. The poignancy of the text *"How dark, O Lord, are thy decrees"* has often been commented upon, as has the fact this work took over seven months to complete (Handel usually completed an oratorio within a single month of intensive creativity). The orchestral excerpts from *Jephtha* being heard in this programme frame some of the most significant dramatic moments of the oratorio. The Ouverture is composed in the French manner, and followed by a brief *Menuet* - both are in the minor key, thus setting the mood for the despair soon to be expressed by one of the protagonists. Within Acts II and III, two Symphonies serve to highlight, in turn, the triumphant return of Jephtha from battle, and the *dénouement* announced by the Angel who spares Jephtha's daughter from imminent sacrifice.

Guiseppe Torelli (1658-1709) is perhaps the foremost composer of instrumental concertos alongside his great contemporary Corelli. Both composers had connections with the important musical centre of Bologna - Corelli's career began there before he moved permanently to Rome, while Torelli was active as a string player in the famous orchestra of San Petronio. Between these two composers one sees the full range of developments within the concerto between c.1680 and 1710. In many ways Torelli had the more long lasting influence, in his establishment of the three movement Fast-Slow-Fast plan. This was adopted by Vivaldi and Albinoni in Venice, as well as Torelli's principle of using a recurring *ritornello* and alternating solo passages. The Trumpet Concerto in D undoubtedly falls within this category, despite the fact that Torelli's practice was to title such works as *sonata* or *sinfonia con Tromba*. Points of interest include the brief *Presto* outburst within the slow movement, and the rather dance-like finale.

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) enjoyed a long and prosperous career which encompassed service in several of the major cities of northern Germany. Several early years were spent in Leipzig where he formed a *collegium musicum* and had works performed in the St Thomas Church. In 1721 he took up the position of Kantor and Director of music for the major city churches in Hamburg. During these years, Telemann was one of the most famous and respected composers in all of Germany, a reputation which has since waned. His significance rests largely on his absorption of the French style and his move towards the *galant* idiom which rose to its height in the mid-18th century. Of his numerous instrumental works in the form of the *suite,* it is the programmatic *Ouvertures* which are of most interest. Telemann's *Water Music*, also known as his *Third Orchestral Suite in C*, presents a most intriguing representation of the mythological characters of the sea, via various typically French dances. After an impressive *Ouverture*, the *Sarabande* and *Bourrée* describe Thetis (Nereus' favourite daughter), first sleeping then waking. Next, Neptune appears in amorous vein in the *Loure*, to be contrasted with the *Harlequinade* of the playful Triton. After Aeolus strikes up a storm, the pleasant Zephyr creates calm in the *Menuet,* followed by the *Gigue* which ebbs and flows. To this, the mariners rejoice in a lively *Canarie*.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) spent much of his career in the service of the Lutheran church whose musical traditions he respected and enriched. His final position as Kantor of St Thomas Leipzig (1723-50) was one which made great demands in the constant need for elaborate music. In addition to weekly cantatas, Bach was required to present large works for church Festivals, particularly Good Friday and Christmas. The *Magnificat in D* BWV 243 was one of several large scale works composed during Bach's first year in Leipzig, The version heard at Christmas services in 1723 was in the key of E flat, with the Latin text interpolated with four movements based on Christmas texts in German. The customary version heard nowadays is thus a reworking which dates from the late 1720s. Along with certain sections of the Mass, the Magnificat was one of several Latin texts retained by the post-Reformation church in Germany. Traditionally associated with Vespers and/or Christmastide, the Magnificat is a direct quotation of the *Canticle of Mary*

found in Luke 1: 46-55. The vivid imagery it contains was not lost upon Bach, who has here created a most joyous setting of this traditional liturgical text. The sheer exultation of the opening chorus *Magnificat anima mea (My soul doth magnify)* is contrasted with the introspective soprano aria *Quia respexit (For He hath regarded the lowliness ...)*. Similarly, the vision of the chorus *Omnes generations (All generations)* is underscored by an intricate interweaving of many lines, while the image of power of *Fecit potentiam (He hath shewed strength)* is conveyed with bold block harmonies over an energetic fugue. The folly of humanity is depicted with a touch of humour - at the end of the alto aria *Esurientes*, the text *the rich He hath sent empty away* is concluded with a solitary note from the bass line, while the flutes are deprived of their final note! Traditional elements dominate the conclusion of the work - a quote of plainchant is intoned by the oboe in the trio *Suscepit*, while the fugue on *Sicut locutus* (referring to *our fathers, to Abraham and his seed*) is decidely archaic and 'learned' in tone. Following a brilliant fanfare-like setting of the *Gloria,* the work concludes with a brief reference to the music of the opening. Scored for five-part chorus, soloists, and an orchestra comprising trumpets and timpani, oboes, flutes and strings, this is justifiably one of Bach's most endearing works.

Series 1, 1995 - Concert No.3, 20 May

Purcell – Selections from The Fairy Queen
Vivaldi - Flute Concerto in F *La Notte*
Rebel – Les Elemens
Pergolesi – Stabat Mater

The final programme in this series continues the connection with text and/or drama seen already in the second concert. Alongside a familiar vocal work from the long tradition of Catholic church music, two highly original works from the French and English stage are being presented. While Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* is undoubtedly his most well-known and popular work, both Jean-Féry Rebel and his ballet depicting the elements of nature are little known gems of the Baroque. To complete the programme, one of most Vivaldi's most ingenious essays in the form of the *concerto.*

Henry Purcell (1659-95) outranks all other English-born composers of the Baroque. During this tercentenary year, his works are being accorded with both wide exposure and a re-evaluation. After *Dido and Aeneas*, his 'semi-opera' *The Fairy Queen* is surely his most revered stage work. English audiences and composers had yet to fully experience and accept the styles of Italian opera that would bring composers such as Handel to London in the early 18th century. Thus theatrical works before 1700 are an interesting amalgam of the English *masque*, incidental music to spoken stage plays, the French courtly *ballet* and more superficially elements of fully-sung *opera.* Loosely based upon Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Purcell's setting of 1692 is almost a complete opera in itself, amounting to more than two hours of music. However, the events of the play are only alluded to - none of dialogue or any of the play's many characters finds a place in *The Fairy Queen.* Instead, the varying moods of the play are given a musical presentation, with frequent appearances of allegorical figures who enlighten the story, and regular interpolations of dance sequences. Thus one can extract any single element - the choruses, the songs or as in tonight's peformance, the dances, and still be left with a satisfying entity.

Antonio Vivaldi (1675-1741) is at once the most familiar composer of the late Italian baroque and one of its more elusive personalities. Apart from his conditions of employment at the Ospedale della Pieta (a Venetian orphanage for girls, also a musical training institution), little is known of Vivaldi the man. His fame today rests upon the more than 500 concertos he composed. However, a survey of his output indicates a continuous involvement in the world of vocal music for both the church and the stage. Vivaldi imbued his works with a vitality and verve that is without parallel - in fact, the publication of an early set of his concertos, more than any other single event, established the "Italian style" throughout Europe. Most of the solo concertos were written for his own instrument the violin, but many others are well catered for. The *Flute Concerto in F La Notte* is one such piece which aptly captures the flexibility and clarity of this instrument. The dual connotations of things pastoral and amorous are also to be found in this charming, but unassuming work.

Jean-Féry Rebel (1661-1747) held an important place in music of the French Baroque, but his fame, both then and now, is far outweighed by others - chiefly his teacher Lully and his brother-in -law Michel Richard de La Lande. Rebel held various court appointments during the reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV, while composing a substantial amount of fine music. His originality is nowhere surpassed than in his ballet *Les Elemens* dating from 1737. The following year the complementary work *Chaos* was composed, which henceforth served as the Introduction(without dancing) to the ballet proper. Nowhere in Baroque music is there a more startling first chord - a veritable cacophony as a very complex discord (representing *Cahos)* is sustained almost to the limit of one's threshold of pain. Meanwhile the elements are variously depicted - *L'Air* by long notes in the flutes followed by trills; *La Terre* (earth) by sustained notes in the bass; *L'Eau* (water) by descending and ascending scales in the flutes; and *Le Feu* (fire) by lively and brilliant interjections by the violins in a high register. These musical illustrations recur throughout the ballet proper, which comprises some of the customary dance types (Loure, Chaconne, Sicillienne) as well as character pieces (Ramage, Rossignols, Tambourin and Caprice)

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-36) had a stunning but all too brief career as a composer of operas and church music. It is a remarkable fact that his short comic opera *La serva padrona* (1733) not only sparked a literary and musical battle, but also helped to establish a whole new genre of Italian theatre. Equally noteworthy is his *Stabat Mater* composed for two voices and strings in 1736. This text is in the form known as a *sequence*, an extra-liturgical hymnlike poetic setting that was extremely popular in the Middle Ages, but later supressed by the Council of Trent in the 16th century. Although ascribed to the 13th century Fransiscan monk Jacopo da Todi, the *Stabat Mater* was officially sanctioned only in 1727. It therefore holds a unique place in the liturgy, and its emotive text has inspired many fine musical settings. Pergolesi's treatment is decidely operatic, especially when compared with those by Palestrina and Haydn. However, much of the church music that came out of Catholic countries in the 18th century had undertones of the secular world. Belonging to a group of composers known as the *Neapolitan school*, it was natural that Pergolesi

should break up the text into a succession of choruses, arias and duets and thus give a personalised interpretation of each stanza. The prevailing doleful nature of the *Stabat Mater* is at times relieved by more optimistic strains such as *Fac ut ardeat (Make my heart aflame)* and *In flammatus et accensus (So that I shall not burn).* At these points, Pergolesi turns towards the major keys, while elsewhere minor keys prevail. Particularly expressive moments include the opening movement where its sinuous overlapping of parts create poignant dissonances, and the penultimate duet *Quando corpus (When my body dies)*, which appears to float in space. Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* is sometimes performed by a chorus and soloists, but a more authentic approach is the use of soloists throughout, as in tonight's concert performance.

Series 2, 1996 - Concert No.1, 30 March

Vivaldi - Sinfonia (Overture) avanti l'Opera *L'Olimpiade* RV695
JS Bach - Violin Concerto in A minor BWV 1041
Handel - Concerto Grosso in B flat Op.3 No.2
JS Bach - Sinfonia from Cantata 42 *Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats* BWV 42, Sinfonia in F BWV 1046a
Biber - *Battaglia*
JC Bach - Symphony in G minor Op.6 No.6

The first programme focuses on the *concerto* and the *sinfonia*, two of the most popular forms of the 18th century. The *concerto* for one or several soloists derives from late 17th century Italy, and was soon adopted by German composers. The *sinfonia* also began its long development in Italy, where it was an outgrowth of vocal works - 'sinfonia' normally designated an instrumental prelude or interlude within an opera, oratorio or cantata. Later, the *sinfonia / symphony* took on an independent existence as a concert genre, once again chiefly under German composers who were open to Italianate influences.

Vivaldi's extensive output of operas is today largely unknown. Of 50 known titles, only 21 scores survive, some of which are incomplete. It is not surprising that Venice's flourishing opera theatres saw works by its most famous resident virtuoso violinist-composer, Vivaldi. *L'Olimpiade*, which was performed during the carnival season of 1734, is based on a text by Pietro Metastasio, the famous contemporary librettist. However, the *Sinfonia avanti l'Opera L'Olimpiade* does not inform us in detail about the drama that is to follow. Like most Italian opera overtures / sinfonias (the terms are interchangeable), the formula of fast movement // expressive slow section // fast dance movement serves primarily to create a general mood of excited expectation. As such, this work quite rightly stands alone as an independent entity. Of particular interest are the numerous echo passages in the opening movement and the 'galant' style violin melody in the central slow section.

It is indicative of the rapid spread of the Italian concerto style that JS Bach, who was at the time a provincial German court composer, adopted it so readily. Within a few years of becoming acquainted with Vivaldi's concerti Op.3 (published 1712), he produced numerous works for a variety of soloistic combinations. It appears that the original versions of many of these early concerti are lost, but fortunately for today's musicians, sometimes survive in the guise of an arrangement for one or more harpsichords. These later versions mostly date from the 1730s, when Bach was directing concerts of the Leipzig Collegium musicum. Bach's few surviving violin concertos therefore represent only a portion of his output for this, the most popular solo instrument of the late Baroque. Like its companion work in E major, the *Violin Concerto in A minor BWV 1041* dates from the Cöthen years (1717-23). Its opening movement features the striking rhythms typical of the Italian style, but when the soloist emerges from within the orchestral texture, it rarely takes on a prominent virtuoso role. In like manner, the last movement with its lilting compound time rhythm, exhibits more the quality of a dance than that of a technical showpiece. By way of contrast, the slow movement features a florid solo melody that highlights the expressive power of the violin.

Handel's concerto output is largely a by-product of his vocal works, with many individual movements deriving from his early operas and oratorios. Unlike his contemporary JS Bach, Handel eschewed the extrovert Vivaldian style in favour of the more restrained style of Corelli. Handel had met Corelli during his sojourn in Rome (1707-9). A typically Corellian feature seen in Handel's Concerti Grossi Op.3 and Op,12 is the frequent occurrence of more than three movements in each work. Some of these are merely very brief linking sections, while others are dance-like. Whereas the works of Op.12 retain the solo grouping of 2 violins and cello as practiced by Corelli, the solo writing in Op.3 is shared between oboes and strings. Each movement of the *Concerto Grosso in B flat Op.3 No.2* features a slightly different scoring from within the solo group of 2 violins, 2 oboes and 2 cellos. Of particular interest is the expressive oboe solo in the Largo movement, which is accompanied by arpeggio figurations in the solo cellos and soft repeated notes in the upper strings. Contrasting solo groups are prominent in the fourth movement - a trio of oboes and bassoon is first answered by solo violins and cello, and then complemented by passages for the full ensemble. This movement also exhibits the rhythmic character of a gigue, in similar vein to the finale, whose theme and two variations proceed in the style of a gavotte.

As stated above, many of Bach's solo concertos were either lost or survive only in a later revision. The church cantatas are often a repository for such 'missing' concerto movements, either functioning as an instrumental introduction, or totally reworked as the basis of a vocal movement. Cantata Nos 146 and 188 probably contain remnants of lost violin concertos, while the tantalising evidence of several lost oboe concertos is to be found in Cantata Nos 35 and 156. The *Sinfonia to Cantata 42 Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats BWV 42*, scored for 2 oboes, bassoon and strings, is yet another case of an introductory movement which features solo instruments throughout. Whereas an opera sinfonia is normally constituted in three movements, Bach's sinfonias within the cantatas are normally in a single section, and related in mood to the rest of the work. Composed in 1725 for the first Sunday after Easter, Cantata 42 contains only

solo recitatives and arias plus a simple concluding chorale. This Sinfonia therefore supplants the customary large scale choral opening movement, thus taking on the role of a mood-setter. Composed within the basic ternary design of a Da Capo aria, this poignant work exhibits the qualities of a lyrical concerto slow movement, a genre in which Bach excelled.

Bach was one of history's great arrangers, as evidenced by his reworkings of Vivaldi as concerti for harpsichord(s) or organ. He was also a most pragmatic musician who willingly rearranged his own works for a subsequent occasion unrelated to their original context. In addition to several concerto movements finding their way into the church cantatas as described above, several of Bach's best known works exist in more than one version. The *Sinfonia in F BWV 1046a* is such a case - not only is it the working version of the opening movement of the first Brandenburg Concerto (c.1713), but it was also 'recycled' as the Sinfonia of Cantata 52 (1726). Owing to its inclusion of 'hunting' horns (*corno da caccia*), the Sinfonia was probably also performed in conjunction with the so-called 'Hunt' Cantata BWV 208 for the birthday of Duke Christian of Saxe-Weissenfels in 1713. When comparing the final 'Brandenburg' version with the *Sinfonia in F*, there is little that distinguishes them. Minor changes such as the swapping of the two horn parts and the absence of a separate solo violin part do not significantly alter the overall design of the work. As one of Bach's first essays in the concerto grosso medium, the texture is often rather dense and rhythmically compact, but throughout a concern for instrumental colour is apparent.

At times the Baroque composer was given to flights of fancy, producing unconventional works that defy the normal categorisations. Such a piece is *Battaglia* composed by Heinrich Biber in 1673. This remarkable composer is renowned for experimentation with unusual instrumental effects, particularly in his *Mystery* violin sonatas. Scored for a 9 part string ensemble, *Battaglia* depicts, through a series of descriptive character pieces, the progress of events surrounding a mock battle. A vigorous opening section, replete with trumpet like fanfares, is followed by a *quodiblet* of eight distinct tunes, depicting a community singing and drinking session. Of special interest is the melody *Kraut und Rüben*, played by the third violin. This tune also appears in another famous quodiblet at the conclusion of JS Bach's *Goldberg* variations. Mars, the god of war, is depicted by a vigorous solo violin accompanied by a 'rattling' effect in the double bass, produced by placing paper underneath the strings. After a tearful Aria, the battle ensues, with imitations of cannon fire between two basses who are instructed to slap the strings against the body of the instrument (premonitions of Bartok nearly 300 years later). Battle pieces are not unknown before Biber - a well known chanson by Jannequin creates similar effects with voices alone, while Monteverdi's *Il Combattimento* includes a battle scene composed for a quartet of strings. It is possible however, that Biber's direct model was a *Capriccio Stravagante* published in 1626 by Farina, and dedicated to the Duke of Saxony.

As the youngest son of Johann Sebastian Bach, Johann Christian pursued a career that was in many ways in direct contrast to his father's. Not content with the life of a German church musician or court composer, he soon travelled south to Italy, later settling in London in 1762. The 'English Bach' gained an early reputation for his Italian operas, but it was in the field of orchestral music that he was to make a distinctive contribution. One of the first composers to write 'concert' rather than 'operatic' symphonies, JC Bach however retained the Italian three movement fast-slow-fast pattern rather than the four movement style commonly used in Mannheim and Vienna. His two sets of symphonies Op.6 and Op.8 which were published in Amsterdam around 1770, are scored for the customary early classical orchestra of strings, 2 oboes and 2 horns. Of these, the *Symphony in G minor Op.6 No.6* is unique in its insistence on minor keys in every movement, thus displaying a *Sturm und Drang* intensity more frequently associated with his elder brother CPE Bach. Furthermore, the rather stark unison passages, extreme dynamic contrasts and angular melodies show JC Bach to be capable of more the than merely 'galant' style. This intensity is maintained throughout, with devices such as obsessively repeated notes in the strings featuring in the finale, which ends rather abruptly with a few soft chords. It would be tempting to draw parallels between this striking work and the symphonies composed in G minor by Haydn (1770) and Mozart (1773) - possible evidence of a universalism within the emerging classical style, as opposed to the more distinctive national 'schools' of the Baroque.

Series 2, 1996 - Concert No.2, 27 April

Geminiani - Concerto Grosso in D Op.2 No.4
Valentini - Concerto Grosso in A minor Op.7 No.11
Vivaldi - La Follia, Op.1 No.12
Avison - Concerto in D No6 (after sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti)
Biber - Ciacona from Suite No6 in G minor from *Mensa Sonora*
Telemann - *Don Quichotte* Suite in G No10 TWV 55

This programme continues the Series' focus on the large scale form of the *concerto*, though with a leavening of works from the chamber music repertoire. Once again, Italian composers of concerti and their imitators are prominent, including two who were primarily active in England. By way of contrast, two Germans noted for their originality are represented via the *suite*, including one which contains an intriguing subtext.

London in the early 18th century was receptive to Italian music of all types, with local audiences and patrons embracing any musicians who were conversant with this style. It mattered not whether composers were Italian born, such as Geminiani, or of German origin, as in Handel's case - the English appetite for opera and orchestral music was limitless. Like his teacher Corelli, Geminiani was a rarity in the Baroque, in that he composed instrumental works exclusively. His fame as a skilled violinist-composer preceded him upon his arrival in London in 1714, after having spent several years in Rome. The legacy of Corelli can be observed in Geminiani's *Concerto Grosso in D Op.2 No.4*, which is in four movements organised along the lines of a *sonata da chiesa* (slow-fast-slow-fast). A generally serious mood is discernible throughout the work, with its preference for contrapuntal textures and rich harmonic progressions - only in the final movement, which is in the style of a gigue, is a lighter tone discernible. Another point of comparison with Corelli is the absence of overt instrumental virtuosity in the solo writing for 2 violins and cello, who merge almost imperceptibly out of the orchestral texture.

The relatively unknown composer Giuseppi Valentini was possibly a contemporary of Geminiani during his years under Corelli's tutelage in Rome c.1700-1710. Despite the many gaps in our knowledge of this composer's career, certain events and circumstances can be proven by way of the dedications of some of his works. For example, the 12 Concerti Grossi Opus 7, published in 1710 and were dedicated to Michelangelo Caetani, Prince of Caserta. Valentini's fondness for adventurous, sometimes even bizarre experiments with instrumental technique is matched by his penchant for unusual keys and harmonic changes. The *Concerto Grosso in A minor Op.7 No.11* is an example of unusual scoring in its use of 4 solo violins, who frequently play without the support of a bass line. Virtuosic scale passages and rapid but brief interjections by pairs of instruments also create a mood of energy and brilliance. Conversely, the work's overall design as a succession of six short movements has much more in common with Corelli, than with the three movement style of concerto which was in the ascendancy in northern Italy.

Vivaldi's fame throughout Europe dates from the publication in 1712 of the 12 concerti Opus 3 *L'estro armonico*. Prior to this, he had worked within the genre of the *sonata* for one or two violins and continuo, particularly in his Opus 1 (published in Venice 1705) and in two later sets published in Amsterdam. In comparison with the 500 or more concertos that Vivaldi eventually composed, this small output of chamber works appears rather meagre, but many individual works repay closer study. Whereas the sonata ca.1700 was normally a multi-movement genre, *La Follia Op.1 No.12* is an imaginative set of 20 variations on the popular melody. With great ingenuity, Vivaldi treats the 16 bar tune, together with its distinctive bass line, to a series of extreme mood and tempo changes. The sheer variety of figurations seen in this work could only have been written by a virtuoso string player. The choice of *La Follia* as the final work of his premier publication was probably a gesture of homage to Corelli, whose own set of variations on this tune concludes his set of solo violin sonatas Op.5 (published 1700).

Charles Avison is an important representative of the rather small group of English born composers of instrumental music who were active in the 18th century. His career was apparently spent almost entirely in the provincial city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Despite this fact, Avison's output of concertos, chamber works and writings on music were considered to be of great significance by many, including the important contemporary authority Charles Burney. Included in his large number of concerti composed in the style of Geminiani and Handel, is a set of 12 works (1744), mostly arranged from keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti. This Italian composer, then living in Spain, was relatively unknown except for the appearance of the early set of *Essercisi,* which was published in London in 1738. The *Concerto No6 in D* displays the typical design of a *sonata da chiesa* (slow-fast-slow-fast), concluding with a dance-like movement in triple time. Though scored for 7 string parts, there are only a relatively few extended solo passages, notably in the lively second movement.

According to Charles Burney, Biber was the best violinist of the 17th century - a remarkable statement considering that the composer rarely travelled outside Salzburg, where he was employed from 1670 until his death. In a later period,

such a virtuoso-composer would have travelled widely, but Biber was nevertheless well known, via a large number of contemporary publications. For example, *Mensa Sonora*, a collection of six ensemble partitas containing sonatas and stylised dances, was published in Salzburg in 1680. The *Ciacona from Suite No6 in G minor* is a fine example of the composer's ability to write idiomatically for strings, although his customary virtuosic daring is missing here. Whereas the traditional *ciacona* theme has the potential for perpetual variations over its characteristic descending bass line, this work is relatively brief, comprising only three statements of the theme. Of special interest is the addition of several extra ornamental notes to the otherwise straightforward bass line.

Telemann's large instrumental *oeuvre* illustrates the variety of approaches open to the 18th century composer - his preference for the 'galant' style with its pronounced French accent was but one of many possibilities that he could have pursued. Whereas his position as Kantor in Hamburg required the provision of much sacred music along traditional German lines, Telemann's secular instrumental music is frequently composed in a much lighter vein. This is especially so in his numerous programmatic Overture-Suites, where he added descriptions of the elements of nature, humour, and vivid characterisations to the standard French pattern of a series of stylised dances. The *Suite in G No10 TWV 55 Don Quichotte* depicts several episodes from the well known story, including some scenes of great comedy via unusual instrumental effects. Telemann once again returned to Cervantes' novel for inspiration - he later produced another comic gem, the short opera-serenata *Don Quichotte at the Marriage of Comacho*, in 1661 at the age of 80!

Series 2, 1996 - Concert No.3, 27 July

Telemann - Overture in C 'Darmstadter'
JS Bach - Harpsichord Concerto in D minor BWV 1052, Mass in G Minor BWV 235
Handel - Laudate Pueri Dominum (Psalm 112 / 113)

The final programme in the series concentrates on the three 'greats' of early eighteenth century Germany. JS Bach, Handel and Telemann, were all of a similar age, training and background, and arguably the finest representatives of the North German school of church musicians. While both Telemann and JS Bach held prominent positions as Kantors in Hamburg and Leipzig respectively, their musical interests also extended into the 'foreign' territory of the Italian concerto and French Ouverture. In contrast, Handel left his homeland in search of Italian opera, eventually establishing himself as the leading composer in England.

Despite Telemann's comparative fame within his own lifetime, the a large proportion of his output has only recently become available to modern performers and audiences. Like much Baroque music, many of Telemann's works survive only in manuscript form. The *Overture in C 'Darmstadter*' owes its subtitle to the city in which Graupner was Kapellmeister, and who was responsible for preserving many of his colleague's manuscripts. Telemann's *Overture in C 'Darmstadter',* in similar vein to his well known *Tafelmusik*, exhibits evidence of a strong French influence upon north German music in the early 18th century. A French *Ouverture* typically begins with a stately section followed by a faster fugal episode, after which the mood lightens with a succession of dances, many of which are capricious and buoyant. The *Darmstadter Overture in C* also contains several character pieces which are not specifically in dance form (*Harlequinade* and *Someille*), a trait also seen in Francois Couperin's keyboard suites.

Great composers who rise to prominence within a style that is already at its height are rarely the formal innovators, or challengers of the *status quo*. Without discounting the genius of a JS Bach or a Handel, they wrote very few works that break new ground in terms of form or style. Their fame rests more in their ability to bring to a climax those elements that already exist, and to produce some of the most enduring examples of the genres currently in use. In Bach's case, however, he created an entirely novel genre in the concerto for harpsichord soloist(s), of which he composed several. In many cases these works are transcriptions of violin concertos, either composed by himself or Vivaldi. In so doing, Bach was able to prove the worth of an instrument not normally given solo status within large orchestral works. The *Harpsichord Concerto in D minor BWV 1052* is probably the best known of the solo works, which were written in the 1730s for Bach's performances with the Leipzig Collegium musicum. Both the first and last movements commence with a strongly rhythmic orchestral ritornello, after which the soloist appears in solo episodes in alternation with shorter interjections by the full ensemble. The final solo sections in both of these movements exhibit an extended buildup of tension which is accompanied by ever more dazzling keyboard effects. In contrast, the slow movement is one of Bach's more lyrical creations, but the brooding intensity remains by its insistence on the minor mode which dominates the entire work.

Bach's sacred music on Latin texts in not extensive, comprising the immortal *Mass in B minor*, the *Magnificat,* four short *"Lutheran" Masses,* and several independent settings of the *Kyrie* and *Sanctus*. While the major requirement of his position in Leipzig was the composition of Cantatas and Motets in German, the use of Latin was not totally unknown in Lutheran circles. Nevertheless, it appears that Bach's most ambitious Latin settings date from the 1730s at a time when he was increasingly disillusioned with his working situation - the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* which later formed the basis of the *B Minor Mass*, for instance, were dedicated to the Elector of Saxony in the hope of obtaining a more satisfying position in Dresden. Conversely, it appears that Bach virtually ceased composing new German cantatas by c.1730, after which he habitually rearranged many of them for entirely new purposes. Like Bach's three other works in the same genre, the *Mass in G Minor BWV 235*, is a reworking of several movements from the cantatas, specifically Nos 72, 102 and 187. Hence there are occasional instances of wordsetting that is not altogether ideal, but the very act or rearrangement for a more general liturgical purpose has ensured the survival of some very fine music. Scored for soloists, choir, oboes and strings, the work alternates between moods of joy and introspection. After a series of impressive block chords on "*Kyrie*", the opening movement is quite fugal in style and texture. The three solo movements within the *Gloria* feature a variety of instrumental colours, from solo oboe ("*Qui tollis*") to unison strings ("*Gratias*"). The work concludes with a florid fugal section on "*Cum sancto*", maintaining the minor mode until the final cadence.

Handel's sojourn in Italy during years 1706-1709 produced some remarkable works which exhibit a youthful daring and experimentation. The early Italian operas *Rodrigo* and *Agrippina*, the oratorio *La Resurrezione* and several dozen secular cantatas all exhibit a desire to identify with the then current fashion for vocal virtuosity and theatrical brilliance. Aspects of this approach can also be observed in the Psalm settings he composed for the Carmelite Vespers in July 1707. Like its companion works, *Dixit Dominus* and *Nisi Dominus*, *Laudate Pueri Dominum* based on Psalm 112 (113) exhibits a dazzling array of vocal pyrotechnics for both soloists and chorus. On occasion, the soprano soloist and

chorus exchange brief passages in the style of a concerto grosso, while at other times the solo voice is featured in a self-contained aria movement. The orchestration of this work is limited to oboes and strings, with a texture mostly in five parts (with divided violas), thus complementing the chorus texture of SSATB. Throughout this work, Handel's preference is for block harmony or brilliant flourishes - rarely is there evidence of strict counterpoint, even in the concluding "*Gloria*", where such a procedure might have been expected. Such a vivacious work inevitably begs the question as to what are the purely 'sacred' elements, though this question would have hardly been an issue to Handel and his contemporaries.

Series 3, 1997 - Concert No.1, 1 March

D Scarlatti - Symphony from *Narcissus*
JS Bach - Concerto for Flute, Violin and Harpsichord in a minor BWV 1044
Vivaldi - Concerto in C for 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets and strings RV 560
Handel – Overture to *Joshua*
Geminiani - *The Inchanted Forest*

The programme features works by the 3 'greats' of late Baroque music - JS Bach, Handel and Domenico Scarlatti (all born in 1685), and two of their contemporaries - Vivaldi (b 1678) and Geminiani (b 1687). The relationships between these composers extend beyond mere chronology, however. Handel met Scarlatti and Geminiani during his sojourn in Rome, a connection which continued during his London years. Handel's Royal Academy produced Scarlatti's opera *Narcissus*, while Geminiani's reputation as England's leading resident violinist was undoubtedly enhanced by his appearances as concertmaster in Handel's performances. In contrast, JS Bach, who never travelled beyond his north German homeland, was greatly influenced by contemporary composers in northern Italy, in particular Vivaldi.

Musical dynasties flourished in the baroque era, with certain families such as the Bachs and the Couperins being associated with a specific genre or style over many generations. Sometimes there occurs a decisive change of artistic direction, when opportunities arose for a family member to develop his own distinct modes of expression. Thus while Alessandro Scarlatti was the most celebrated Italian opera composer during the late Baroque, his son Domenico is best known for the numerous solo harpsichord sonatas composed in Spain in his later years. However, Domenico's ultimate career direction followed a long period of following in his father's footsteps, in composing at least 10 operas between 1703 and 1718. *Amor d'un ombra e gelosia d'un aura* was produced in Rome early in 1714, and again (renamed as *Narcissus*) in London in 1720. The latter version was presented under the auspices of the recently founded Royal Academy, which was under the direction of Handel. The promoter of Scarlatti's cause in England was his Irish acquaintance Thomas Roseingrave, who not only provided some additional music for *Narcissus*, but also facilitated the publication of 40 of the harpsichord sonatas in 1738. The *Symphony from Narcissus* is in the typical 3 movement plan of operatic overture established by Alessandro Scarlatti, (namely Fast - Slow - Minuet or Gigue), and is scored for strings, oboes and continuo. As was the common practice, the festive curtain-raising mood of the symphony - sinfonia has little to do with the plot of the opera which it precedes, and so it is readily performable as an independent concert work.

The dating of Bach's concertos is often imprecise, since many of these works do not survive in their original scoring. While it may be assumed that many of the concertos were performed during the composer's tenure as director of the Leipzig Collegium Musicum (1729-41), exact dates of composition are difficult to determine. Such a point may not be of great importance, except where an unprecedented grouping of soloists is specified, as in the *Concerto for Flute, Violin and Harpsichord in a minor BWV 1044.* This work exhibits a close resemblance to the Brandenburg concerto No5 - both works features the striking innovation of including a harpsichord as soloist. A further resemblance with its Brandenburg 'relative' is that the slow movement of BWV 1044 dispenses entirely with the orchestra, thus highlighting the solo group as a self-sufficient ensemble. For a variety of technical and circumstantial reasons, it now appears that both these works can be dated c.1720. The Concerto BWV 1044 was formerly thought to have dated from c.1730, since its outer movements are a reworking of the keyboard Prelude and Fugue BWV 894, and the *Adagio* closely resembles the third Trio Sonata for organ BWV 527, which was composed in the mid 1720s. This concerto therefore displays the rather unusual format of Prelude - Slow movement - Fugue. Thus the outer movements combine elements of the keyboard-inspired contrapuntal technique with the customary ritornello structure of the Vivaldi-like concerto form.

On first appearances, it may seem rather odd to be featuring the clarinet in a Baroque programme. This instrument's rise to prominence is normally dated from the mid-18th century in the hands of the Mannheim composers and later, the Viennese classicists. In fact, Vivaldi was not averse to employing, as soloists in his concertos, some instruments not normally considered to be worthy of the role. Hence the clarinet and the chalumeaux, the theorbo and the horn are each provided with a considerable amount of concerto material from this most prolific of Baroque composers. For some time it was argued that the 'clarinet' designation in the concerto RV560 and its companion RV 559 refers to the high *clarino* register of the natural trumpet. This theory is easily disproved by internal evidence. While most of this work could be performed by trumpets in C, several low phrases employ notes outside of the natural overtone series to which these instruments are restricted. After a brief introductory *Larghetto*, the first movement displays a forthright directness, as well as some harmonically interesting modulations to minor keys. During the *Largo*, the clarinets are silent while the oboes lead with an expressive melody, accompanied by a simple bass line played in unison in the strings. The full complement of soloists is featured again in the final movement, with the pairs of oboes and clarinets appearing mainly in alternate phrases. Also of interest in this movement is the fully written out cadenza for the four soloists before the final statement of the ritornello.

Handel's career in England divides into two major periods of approximately 20 years each, devoted in turn to opera and oratorio. However, it was his oratorios, and not the operas, that maintained Handel's profile as England's favourite composer in his latter years and long after his death. The convergance of English choral music traditions with Italian vocal styles and the epic stories from the Old Testament ensured that these works were popular with contemporary audiences. Although *Joshua* was composed at the height of Handel's fame in 1748, and treated to two repeat seasons in the 1750s, it has not achieved the mythical status of some of his other oratorios. This may be due to its less vivid characterisation, rather than its elaborate orchestral scoring - its first season also saw the premiére of the Concerto *a due chori* No.1 which features a large wind section [see Concert 3]. The *Overture to Joshua,* however, is a modest single movement for strings and oboes (enigmatically titled *Introduzione a tempo di Ouverture*), rather than the customary multi-sectional sinfonia [see above]. Just as Handel regularly recycled his own compositions, he often borrowed others' music, a commonplace practice in the 18th century. This *Overture* and the *March* from Act II are a case in point, being based upon the Viennese organist Gottlieb Muffat's *Componimenti*, published in 1739.

Geminiani was one of the greatest Italian violinist-composers of the early 18th century, though for much of his life he worked abroad. After training under Corelli in Rome, he relocated to England in 1714, thus paralleling the most important career move of his German colleague, Handel. These two composers did much to preserve Corelli's music and reputation, by emulating his concerto grosso style. Geminiani also published his own concerto grosso arrangements of Corelli's solo violin sonatas in London in 1726. Thus at a time when Vivaldi's style was in the ascendancy on the Continent, composers working in England followed a different path. Geminiani's later years were spent travelling and publishing his renowned treatises on violin performance. During a visit to Paris in the mid 1750s Geminiani presented his imaginative orchestral work *The Inchanted Forest* [sic], which was staged as part of a pantomime spectacle at the Tuilleries palace. The title is supposedly 'suggestive of the same ideas' as those found in Canto XIII of Tasso's monumental literary work *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575). This epic poem had been very popular with earlier Italian composers, including Monteverdi, whose one act opera *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* is based on Canto XII. Scored for a solo group of 2 violins and cello, and an orchestra of strings, flutes, horns, and trumpets, *The Inchanted Forest* displays an array of instrumental colours not normally found in Geminiani's concertos. Similarly the tempo designation *affetuoso* is more akin to the *Fin du siècle* 'galant' style rather than the Italian high baroque. The French penchant for instrumental music suggestive of birds and nature ensured this work's success, though this work is not explicitly descriptive. By way of introduction, and in the style of later eras when programmatic music was more the fashion, it is worthwhile to quote here a few extracts from Tasso:

From Godfrey's camp a grove a little way,
Amid the valleys deep, grows out of sight,
Thick with old trees, whose horrid arms display
An ugly shade, like everlasting night: ...

Thither no groom drives forth his tender sheep
To browse, or ease their faint in cooling shade;
Nor traveller nor pilgrim there to enter
(So awful seems that forest old) dare venture ...

... No twist, not twig, no bough, nor branch, therefore,
The Saracens cut from that sacred spring;
But yet the Christians spared ne'er the more
The trees to earth with cutting steel to bring.

... With trembling fear make all the Christians flee,
When they presume to cut these cedars old.
This said, his charms he 'gan again repeat,
Which none can say but they that use like feat.

(trans. Edward Fairfax)

Series 3, 1997 - Concert No.2, 12 April

Rameau - Suite from *Dardanus*, Ouverture from *Pygmalion*
Handel - "But who may abide" and "Rejoice greatly" from *Messiah*
JS Bach - "Erbarme dich" from *St Matthew Passion*, Orchestral Suite No2 in b minor BWV 1067
Vivaldi - *Gloria in D* RV 589

The second programme focusses on forms inspired by, or connected with, the voice or the dance. Selections from the quintessentially French genres of opéra and ballet by Rameau are juxtaposed with one of Bach's finest orchestral suites. By way of contrast, highlights from three of the great traditions of Baroque sacred music will also be heard - the German passion, the English oratorio, and orchestrally accompanied Latin church music.

Rameau's theatrical genius was revealed rather late in his long career, after many years' service as a cathedral organist and public fame as a keyboard composer and theorist. At the age of 50, he composed his first opera *Hippolyte et Arice* in 1733. Due to the patronage of Le Riche de la Pouplinière, who maintained a private orchestra, Rameau was in a priveleged position of being able to experiment with instrumentation and thereby greatly expand the range of his creative output. The *Suite from Dardanus* presents some of the highlights of what is thought to be amongst his finest works in the *tragèdie en musique* genre. First performed with limited success in 1739, *Dardanus* was revived in 1744 and 1760 with numerous alterations. Typical of the French operatic style is the inclusion of frequent dance sequences and other instrumental numbers. Amongst the revisions was the inclusion of the violent *Bruit de guerre*, an entr'acte depicting an offstage battle. Closer to the world of dance is the pair of *Tambourins* which display a rustic angularity. The conclusion of both this suite and the opera is the majestic *Chaconne*, where Rameau shows his mastery of orchestral colour, with constantly varying instrumental combinations and imaginative melodic variants.

The best known oratorio in the repertoire**,** *Messiah* underwent numerous alterations during Handel's lifetime. In fact, one quarter of the work was revised or recomposed depending on which singers were available during a particular season. After a tentative beginning, *Messiah* was performed annually with great success in the composer's latter years, in a version almost indentical to that commonly presented since Handel's death. The two arias being heard tonight, both from Part I of the work, are examples of the continual reworking of an original concept until both composer and performers were satisfied.

"But who may abide" began its life as a bass aria which is in a uniform tempo throughout. On certain occasions when a suitable singer was unavailable, this text was delivered via a perfunctory recitative version, which denies any oppportunity for descriptive text setting. Upon the arrival in London in 1750 of the castrato Gaetano Guadagni, Handel was eager to feature this performer's virtuoso abilities. For this purpose, the composer capitalised upon the inherent theatricality of the second strain "for he is like a refiner's fire". This is the commonly performed version, with its two contrasting Affections - lyrical expressiveness and a furious outburst with rushing string passages -each of which is heard twice. In 1752, Guadagni was unavailable, so this version was subjected to a further revision, being transposed upwards for the soprano Giulia Frasi.

"Rejoice greatly" was originally a full length Da Capo aria in a lilting 12/8 time signature, though this was later revised with a much shortened return of the 'A' section. The commonly heard version in 4/4 time with its greater emphasis on vocal brilliance dates from either 1745 when 'La Francesina' performed the work, or possibly 1749 when Frasi first appeared in *Messiah*. Opinions vary as to which version more appropriately captures the mood of joyous expectation, but it is clear that Handel himself preferred the latter setting with its combination of vocal coloratura and short excited phrases.

Within the context of the German passion-oratorio, the extended aria has a special significance. Unlike Italian opera, where the arias are sung by the principal characters in the drama, Bach's Passion soloists stand outside the tide of events as interested observers. Rather, their role is to bring the story of Christ's suffering into a contemporary context, offering a personal reaction of the believer. In the *St Matthew Passion*, the alto arias express a remarkable unity of Affection irrespective of their context within the drama. The text of four of these arias include either the impassioned response 'my weeping' or the sincere plea 'have mercy'. The poignant "Erbarme dich" includes both elements, in reaction to the scene of Peter's denial of Christ. The vocal line is replete with sighing motives and phrases, while an elaborate solo violin obbliggato provides an instrumental response. The melodic lines are supported by sustained chords in the strings, an instrumental affect which is used throughout the work whenever Christ speaks - thus it is as if the protagonist is symbolically present in this poignant aria.

Bach devoted much of his creative energies to the genre fo the suite, particularly in its various manifestations for solo string or keyboard instruments. This interest culminated in the 6 Partitas published as Part 1 of the monumental *Clavierübung* during the 1730s. The orchestral suite (*Ouverture*) is less well represented in his oeuvre, but each of the

four works in this category exhibits a masterly command of the large ensemble medium. Despite not being composed as a set, but rather as individual works over a twenty year period, Bach shows remarkable consistency in his treatment of the various dance types. The *Orchestral Suite No2 in b minor BWV 1067* was probably the last to be composed (c.1739), and is the closest Bach ever came to writing a flute concerto. The transverse flute is featured as a soloist in many of the dance movements, but elswehere it doubles the first violin part, according to the French practice. Like its companion works, the Suite in b minor opens with an expansive Ouverture. However, the typical pattern of dance movements is avoided, with the Allemande, Courante and Gigue being deleted. In their place, Bach includes some of the most popular *Galanteries*, namely a *Rondeau* in gavotte rhythm, a pair of *Bourrées*, a *Polonaise* with a *Double* (variation) for solo flute and continuo, and a simple *Menuet*. The effervescent finale featuring the solo flute in its most animated guise, is in the extremely rare form of the *Badinerie*. Perhaps this was in homage to Telemann who had also employed the form in one of his orchestral suites. Bach's famous colleague was at this time working as Kantor in Hamburg, and was godfather to his second son Carl Philip Emanuel. Many years before Telemann had founded the Leipzig collegium musicum which was directed by JS Bach between 1729 and 1741. It was this fine performing organization which undoubtedly saw the premiére performance of Bach's *Suite No2 in b minor*.

Once Rameau had 'arrived', albeit rather belatedly, into French theatrical circles, he composed a range of works covering every available genre for the stage. Fifteen years after the premiére of his first opera (see above), the single act *Pygmalion* was staged. Designated as an *Acte de ballet*, it was based on a libretto by Ballot de Sarot after La Motte's *Le Triomphe des Arts*. Due to its brevity, the drama has little time to expand, but there are some endearing moments at the point when the statue comes to life and learns to dance. The *Ouverture from Pygmalion i*s in the form typical of the French theatrical genres - a stately beginning, in this case punctuated by brief solo passages for oboes and bassoons, and a lively fugal section. The latter section displays Rameau's inguenity for creating a compellingly idiosyncratic mood, with the use of a musical motive consisting primarily of repeated notes within a lively 6/8 tempo.

With the exception of the *Gloria in D* and the *Magnificat in g minor*, Vivaldi's vast output of operas and sacred music is largely unknown today, . The popularity of the *Gloria* is in no small part due to the role it played in the mid-20th century revival of Vivaldi, when it was included in a concert programme of sacred works in Siena in 1939. While he was employed as *Maestro di violino* at the Pio Ospedale della Pièta, it is likely that Vivaldi composed his numerous liturgical works for this charitable institution. Vivaldi's oratorios and operas, however would have been performed in the public venues throughout Venice. The question naturally arises whether Vivaldi ever heard the *Gloria in D RV 589* performed by mixed voices (or for that matter the other setting, RV 588, also in D). Andrew Parrott amongst others has recently suggested that the orphanage girls performed all of the choral parts, thus producing a sound world more in sympathy with the solo sections, which are scored for only soprano or alto voices. Despite Vivaldi's use of a traditional text, this work displays a remarkable invention and diversity of mood and texture. After appearing first in the lively duet *Laudamus te*, each solo voice is heard in arias in a constrasting lyrical vein. The choral movements likewise display great variety, ranging from the fanfare-like opening, the poignant *Et in terra pax*, to the block harmonies for *Gratias* and *Qui tollis*, the brief fugue on *Propter magnum* and the dance like *Domine fili*. Only in the finale does the characteristic individuality of the composer wane. This movement is in fact a reworking of a 1708 setting by the Venetian composer Ruggieri. The rather economical scoring of the *Gloria in D* for one trumpet, one oboe and strings is used to advantage. Throughout, the strings are treated to imaginative figurations evocative of the text, while the oboe is featured in a most characteristic obbliggato part to the soprano aria *Domine Deus*. In the opening movement, the oboe's ability to blend with the trumpet in its fanfare register enhances the work's festive mood.

Series 3, 1997 - Concert No.3, 10 May

Handel - Suite No.2 in D major from *Water Music*,Concerto *a due cori* No.2 in F major HWV 333
Vivaldi - Concerto No.2 in d minor for 2 Violins and Cello from *L'estro armonico* Op.3
JS Bach - Brandenburg Concerto No.5 in D major BWV 1050
Haydn - Symphony No7 in D *Le Midi*

The third programme of the series returns to the major instrumental forms of the concerto and the suite. Of special interest is that each work being heard has an external point of reference, either to another composition, a historical situation, or to an extra-musical idea. Handel was never far removed from the vocal idioms in which he excelled, as can be seen in his reworking of oratorio movements in the composition of many of his concertos. Both Bach and Handel had close contacts with royalty, as witnessed by numerous commissions and dedications. In particular, the Prussian and Hanoverian dynasties of the early 18th century have been immortalised in music such as the *Brandenburg* concertos and the *Water Music*. Haydn's symphony *Le Matin* was amongst the first works he composed for his patrons, the Esterhazy family. In contrast, the precise meaning of the enigmatic designations of Vivaldi's publications are less obvious, though the inventiveness of the works of his Op.3, *The Harmonic Fantasy* show this to be a most apt title.

The *Water Music* has been traditionally connected with the oft-cited story of Handel's reconciliation with his employer, George Elector of Hanover. Handel was enjoying an extended leave of absence at the time of the Hanoverian succession to the English throne in 1714. Whether or not this work was played at a boating party that year, the reconciliation probably took place under rather different circumstances. According to Charles Burney, the violinist-composer Geminiani, who had also arrived in England in 1714, was responsible for introducing Handel to the English court in the role of continuo accompanist in some newly composed violin sonatas. Therefore, if Handel's *Water Music* was subsequently performed on the River Thames on July 17, 1717, the event was more of a court spectacle than a peace offering from composer to patron. In fact, Handel was probably never really out of favour with his erstwhile employer, who had generously granted him leave to travel so extensively throughout Europe. Unlike the majority of the composer's concertos, the *Water Music* was not derived from his composer's vocal works. Instead, it was composed anew, as a festive occasional work for outdoor performance - hence the strong presence of wind and brass. The complete work includes movements in the keys of F (well suited to horns) and G (featuring strings and flutes), and of course D (featuring trumpets). The *Suite No.2 in D major* is therefore the most richly scored, as it includes pairs of both trumpets and horns, in addition to the customary oboes, bassoons and strings. D major is traditionally the key of royalty and festive celebration, and therefore much of the writing is fanfare-like in quality. Despite the limitation in terms of melodic style and possibility of modulation to other keys, the sheer joyousness of the instrumental writing outweighs any sense that this music is of only passing 'occasional' interest.

Few publications of contemporary music have had a more immediate and universal impact than Vivaldi's Op.3 *L'estro armonico*. After releasing two early collections of chamber music through a local Venetian publisher, the composer allied his talent to the superior engraving skills of the Amsterdam publishing house of Roger. Thus in 1712 the international fame of Vivaldi was assured, with a reissue of his violin sonatas Op.2, and the more importantly the concerti for 2, 3 or 4 violins of Op.3. The remarkably energetic style of the string writing, the wealth of imaginative musical ideas, and the clarity of form were unparalleled in the concerto genre, which was rapidly spreading beyond its Italian origins. The *Concerto No.2 in d minor for 2 Violins and Cello* exhibits all of the best qualities of *L'estro armonico*, as well as some unique touches. A striking introduction of rather stark chords *Adagio e spiccato* builds a level of tension which can only explode in the vigorous opening ritornello of the *Allegro* and the scintillating solo passages placed high in the violin's register. Normally the full orchestra would repeat the opening ritornello at the conclusion of the first movement, but here too Vivaldi shows his unwillingness to conform to a predictable pattern - the final re-statement of the main ideas is assigned to one of the soloists. Within the slow movement, the soloists take on a more traditional role as a trio sonata group which is assigned phrases in direct contrast to the full ensemble. In contrast, the gigue-like finale exhibits a certain unpredicability, with numerous harmonic surprises. In addition, there are extended passages for two out the three soloists - firstly for violin and cello, and then for the violins alone, during which the upper strings of the orchestra take over the bass line function normally assigned to the continuo.

While the manuscript of the six concertos dedicated to the Margrave of Brandenburg records March 24, 1721 as the completion date, several of these works can be ascribed to a much earlier period. The unusual scoring of No6 suggests it was written before Bach arrived in Cöthen in 1717, while No1 was possibly connected with a cantata performed in Weimar in 1716. However, the long gestation period of the *Brandenburg* concertos does not detract from their unparalleled originality of scoring and structure. This aspect was undoubtedly inspired by the skills of the 18 musicians Bach had at his disposal in Cöthen. History had not dealt kindly with the Margrave, who never acknowledged receipt of his 'commission'. It is rather unlikely that he would have had at his disposal the instrumental resources needed to

perform the works. However, the circumstances of Bach's meeting with the Margrave in 1718 or 1719 are indirectly immortalised in the *Brandenburg Concerto No.5 in D major BWV 1050* - the composer was visiting Berlin at the time to negotiate the purchase of a new harpsichord. The choice of a keyboard instrument as a fully-fledged member of the solo group in a concerto was most probably Bach's invention, though the partnership with solo flute and violin is not unique in his output [see Concert 1]. Whereas the central movement features the three instruments on an equal footing as members of a self-sufficient ensemble (the orchestra is silent throughout), the opening *Allegro* showcases the harpsichord in extended brilliant passages and a most extraordinary cadenza. Only in the third movement are all of the participants treated equally, in a joyous dance-like celebration with passages of contrapuntal interplay between soloists and the full orchestra.

Most of Handel's orchestral works, and in particular the Concerti Grossi of Op.3, are compilations of movements from his oratorios and operas. Conversely, many of Handel's own oratorio performances saw the inclusion of instrumental works as 'interval entertainments'. The three *Concerti a due chori* appeared in this manner during the seasons of 1747-48, at a time when the English oratorio was quickly becoming a fixture in London's musical life. It is possible that audiences for *Alexander Balus* in 1747 would have recognised some of the music from the *Concerto a due cori No.2 in F Major HWV 333,* which is based upon selections from the 1718 version of *Esther*, *Messiah,* the *Birthday Ode for Queen Anne* and the *Occasional Oratorio*. However, modern audiences are more likely to recognise the third movement immediately as the chorus 'Lift up your heads' from *Messiah*, than would have Handel's patrons in 1747. This work had yet to become a staple repertoire item with its annual season of performances. The *due chori* of the title refers to the double choir of winds (each of 2 oboes, 2 horns and bassoon), to which are assigned most of the important musical ideas. In his reworking of the original materal, Handel ascribes the vocal solos to one of the winds, for example the horn solo in the first movement, which is an arrangement of 'Jehovah is crowned' from *Esther*. Similarly the second and fourth movements are closely modelled on choruses from *Esther.* The remaining movements are more substantial reworkings. In particular the finale, which includes newly composed passages for the solo oboes, is framed by sections taken directly from the chorus 'God found them guilty' from the *Occasional Oratorio* of 1746. Handel's adoption of England as his permanent place of residence was facilitated by his early entrée into royal circles, an honour also enjoyed by his predecessor Purcell. Perhaps this was the reason for Handel's use of a Purcell-like ground bass in the chorus 'The day that gave Anna birth' from the *Birthday Ode for Queen Anne* of 1713. However, this bass line pattern, which underpins the fifth movement of the *Concerto No2*, bears a strong resemblance to that of the ubiquitous Pachelbel *Canon in D*, suggesting a more cosmopolitan origin.

On first glance, one might question the inclusion of a Haydn symphony in a baroque series. However, this 'classical' composer was trained within the late Baroque style, a heritage which he never completely forgot. In the 1750s, Haydn was already working as a freelance musician in Vienna, while Handel was at the height of his popularity as England's favourite composer. By the time Haydn visited London in the 1790s, he himself had risen to the status of the world's most famous living composer. A highlight of this visit was a commemorative festival performance of a Handel oratorio, at which Haydn was moved to describe his predecessor as "the master of us all". Stylistically, Haydn's early symphonies are also very close to the spirit of the baroque. For example, his brilliant trilogy Le Matin - Le Midi - Le Soir (Symphony Nos 6-8) features a wealth of soloistic passages more akin to the style of a concerto grosso than a 'classical' orchestral work. In the Symphony No7 in D *Le Midi*, significant solo roles are assigned to the violin, cello, and flutes. In particular the slow movement features the first violin in the role of an opera singer - a lyrical aria is preceding by a soliloquy in the style of an accompanied recitative. Though these three symphonies each follow the conventional four movement plan, Haydn imbues them with a sense of occasion. This symphonic progression throughout the times of day begins with a glowing sunrise and concludes with depiction of a summer storm in the finale of Le Soir. The combination of orchestral brilliance and pictorial imagery would have delighted Haydn's newfound patrons, the Esterhazy family, whom he served from 1761 until his death. Finally, it is interesting to note that Haydn continued to compose music inspired by nature, particularly in his last oratorio The Seasons. One wonders whether this was a conscious reference to the namesake work by Vivaldi. The historical coincidences continue - at the time of his death in 1741, Vivaldi was visiting Vienna, where the young Haydn was a cathedral chorister.

Series 3, 1997 - Concert No.4, 26 July

JS Bach - Orchestral Suite No.3 in D major BWV 1068, Concerto in C minor for Oboe, Violin and Strings BWV 1060, Concerto in d minor for 2 Violins and strings BWV 1043, Brandenburg Concerto No.4 in G BWV 1049

The final programme in this series showcases some of the most familiar works by the Baroque's unequalled master, JS Bach. Rather than being a creator of new genres and techniques, this composer brought the form and style of late Baroque music to unparalleled heights of complexity and diversity. His skill at writing for many parts, while preserving the individuality of each line, is seen in all of his concertos, particularly those featuring more than one soloist. Similarly, Bach's mastery of the stylised Baroque dance forms reaches its height in his orchestral suites.

Each of Bach's four orchestral suites exhibits several unique characteristics in terms of either instrumental scoring or choice of dance types. Whereas in his keyboard suites Bach generally maintained the customary order of dances (Allemande, Courante, Sarabande and Gigue), the orchestral suites emphasise the so called *Galanteries* or 'optional' dances. Thus in the orchestral suites there are no Allemandes. Their introductory function is supplanted by extended Ouverture movements. Similarly, the Courante, Sarabande and Gigue are only used once throughout the set (in Suites 1, 2 and 3 respectively), while rather surprisingly, No4 contains none of the usual dances. The joint highlights of the *Orchestral Suite No.3 in D major BWV 1068* are the brilliant trumpet writing and serene *Air*, the movement which retains its popularity despite the rather unfortunate nickname 'on the G string'. Furthermore, this orchestral suite as a whole exhibits a forward momentum rarely encountered in Baroque works. Following the serene poise of the *Air*, each successive movement increases in tempo and energy until a triumphant climax is reached. In the resplendent *Gigue*, the trumpets soar high above the strings. Quite possibly Bach composed this and other virtuoso trumpet parts for Gottfreid Reiche, who as a leading Leipzig musician, would have participated in the concerts of the *collegium musicum*. The brilliance and exuberance of the *Suite No3* reflects a newfound inspiration by composing orchestral works, at a time Bach's motivation for producing sacred music was hampered by continuing difficulties with both the town council and church authorities. The *Suite No3* was probably composed within the first years of his tenure with the collegium musicum, a fruitful association which commenced in 1729, and which saw the production of much fine music while Bach was at the height of his powers.

Bach's choice of instrument for the numerous solo concertos is restricted to the harpsichord, the violin or the oboe. However, it is largely due to his interest in constantly re-arranging his own works, that modern musicians have access to those for violin and oboe. The original versions of at least 2 oboe concertos and 4 violin concertos are lost, as is the *Concerto in c minor for Oboe, Violin and Strings BWV 1060.* These and other works have been preserved in a later reincarnation as concertos for harpsichord(s) composed for performances with the Leipzig collegium musicum. Thus the work being heard tonight exists both in a version for 2 harpsichords, and in the better known 'original' version (which has lately achieved mass-media status as the signature tune for a national radio programme). Within the first movement, the characterisation of the oboe as an expressively melodic voice is contrasted with the violin which is given to more active figurations. As is often the case with a Bach concerto, the slow movement vies for one's attention as the focal point of the work, with its seemingly endless arabesque of melodic invention for the two equally important solo instruments. To further highlight the solo lines, the orchestral strings provide a discreet *pizzicato* accompaniment. The assertive character of the work's opening returns in the finale which exhibits all of the drive and purpose normally seen in a first movement, in addition to an unflagging contribution by each of the soloists.

Few of Bach's string concertos are known today in their original form (see above). Only the *Concerto in D minor for 2 Violins and strings BWV 1043*, together with the solo violin concertos in A minor and E major have survived in their original versions. These three works probably date from Bach's Cöthen years, and thus are contemporary with the *Brandenburg concertos* [see Concert 3]. The D minor work is however, not a typical concerto grosso, since the solo parts are fully developed and often tend to dominate the texture. The proper designation is therefore a 'double' concerto, in the manner of those for 2 harpsichords or that for oboe and violin BWV 1060 (see above). While Bach was eager to incorporate the Italian concerto style *à la Vivaldi* which he had encountered probably as early as 1713, he could not deny his north German heritage as a composer of contrapuntal music for keyboard or voices. Thus each movement of the double violin concerto presents a series of imitative entries shared between soloists and sections of the orchestra, producing at times a very active interplay within the string texture. Each of the solo violins takes turns in leading or following, or in blending with full ensemble, with themes that are amongst the most striking ever penned by Bach. Whereas in the first movement, the first violin is permitted to play an entire phrase before the second violin enters, the final movement exhibits a greater urgency, with extremely close points of imitation. Throughout, Bach's debt to Vivaldi can be seen in the motoric rhythms and clear melodic outlines, but his individual style is once more best seen in the broadly phrased slow movement.

Bach's designation of the *Brandenburg Concerto No.4 in G BWV 1049 à violino Prencipale due Fiauti d'Echo* [sic] has caused controversy and confusion for both scholars and performers. While it is now clear that he had simply not deliberately mispelt the common term for recorder (*flûte a bec* - referring to its beaked-shape mouthpiece), it is improbable that Bach was merely referring to the echo passages found in the slow movement. On closer investigation as to the nature of the role assigned to the principal instruments, it becomes evident that this work is more like a violin concerto than a normal concerto grosso with three equally important parts. In the outer movements the violin is given some extremely virtuosic passages, while at no time do the recorders present solo lines for any extended period. Instead, they mostly double the strings or provide brief interjections in parallel 3rd or 6ths, often as a foil for the solo violin. Quite possibly this was the point behind Bach's designation - the violin is more virtuosic while the flute parts are more thematically significant. Despite this fact, all three soloists are easily heard above the orchestral texture, owing to the generally high pitch of their phrases. Just as Bach never tired of revising his early violin concertos for harpsichord(s), so too did he re-arrange this work for harpsichord and 2 recorders, transposed to F major as BWV 1057. A similar fate awarded to the double violin concerto BWV 1043 (as a double harpsichord concerto in D minor BWV 1057). The perpetual popularity of both of these works assures their continuing familiarity primariliy in the original versions, keys and instrumentations, as is being performed tonight.

Series 4, 1998 - Concert No.1, 28 March

Arne - Overture No.7 from Eight Overtures in Eight Parts
Handel - Overture and Suite from *Il Trionfo del tempo e del Disinganno*
Avison - Concerto No.9 in a minor (after sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti)
Boyce - Symphony in D Op.2 No5
JC Bach - Favourite Overture No1 in D
Vivaldi - Concerto in C for 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, Bassoon and strings RV 556
Handel - Orchestral Concerto No3 in D

This programme focusses on the music of Italy and England during the 18th century. The musical scene in England was largely dominated by international influences, whereas Italy remained the stylistic leader during the entire Baroque era. This is nowhere more clearly obvious than in the careers of Handel and J.C.Bach. Both of these musicians foreswore their German background to work exclusively within the Italian style, while studying in Italy and later as residents of England. It however should be noted that England was not without its homegrown talent, as the careers of Arne, Boyce and Avison demonstrate.

Arne was one of England's most successful theatrical composers in the mid-18th century. His involvement ranged from providing a few songs for productions of Shakespearean plays to full-length masques and operas such as *Comus* (1738) and *The Judgement of Paris* (1740). Arne's ability to write well using the the English language is clearly evident in these works, as is his patriotism in the famous air "Rule Britannia" from *Alfred* (1740). As was the customo of the day, composers would frequently re-published the overtures from their theatrical successes as independent orchestral works. Thus the *Eight Overtures in 8 Parts* published by Walsh in 1751 contains at least three works of theatrical origin. The *Overture No.7*, originally from his popular *Comus*, is the most extrovert work of the entire set. Scored for trumpets, oboes and strings, the three movements are in the typical plan of slow introduction - fast fugal sections - dance movement.

In similar vein, Handel's first oratorio *Triumph of Time and Truth*, composed in Rome in 1707, provides an *Overture and Suite*. Recently arrived from north Germany, Handel's work was a product of early contacts made with some of Rome's greatest patrons. Rome was a city which did not officially encourage opera, but the locally produced oratorios bore clear traces of theatrical style. Similarly, the instrumental writing is derived in large part from operatic conventions, such as the tri-partite *Overture* which culminates in a dance movement. The other movements selected for the suite include a *Sonata* for obbliggato organ solo and orchestra (a precursor of the concertos Handel wrote as oratorio interval entertainments in London), an *Aria* (the first version of the well known "Laschia chio panga"), and a concluding *Allegro* movement.

Charles Avison's career was apparently spent almost entirely in the provincial city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Despite this fact his compositional output as well as his writings on music were considered to be of great significance by the great contemporary authority Charles Burney. In addition to a large number of concerti composed in the style of Geminiani and Handel, is a set of 12 works (1744). These were mostly arranged from keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti. This Italian composer, then living in Spain, was relatively unknown except for the appearance of the early set of *Essercisi,* which was published in London in 1738. Avison's *Concerto No9 in a minor* displays the typical design of a *sonata da chiesa* (slow-fast-slow-fast), concluding with a dance-like movement in siciliano style. Though scored for 7 string parts, there are only a relatively few extended solo passages, notably in the lively second movement.

The *Eight Symphonys* published in 1760 by Boyce are today amongst his best known works. However, at the time of their appearance, they elicited little interest as they were mostly composed in a late Baroque style popular around 1740. Thus they were regarded as somewhat out of fashion in the cosmopolitan English musical scene. This apparent failure was despite the fact that Boyce had recently been appointed as Master of the King's Musick. In similar style to the Arne Overture also being played on this programme, the *Symphony in D Op.2 No5* bears traces of a theatrical background, with its concluding dance movements. However, this work does not have the customary opening slow section, and is in four movements rather than the usual three. The key of D invites the presence of trumpets, which gives the opening movement in particular a festive tone.

J.C.Bach and Handel had much in common. Both were trained in the style of north German church music, and yet found their true artistic home in the world of Italian opera and oratorio. Similarly both worked for the latter part of their careers in London, and were accepted as the leading musicians of their day. In fact, Handel died merely three years before J.C.Bach arrived in London, who like his compatriot had his first successes in London in theatrical music. The *Six Favourite Overtures* which appeared in 1763, were like many orchestral works of the period, derived from operas. The first of these is taken from the opera *Orione,* which was first performed with great success in London in 1763. However, this work is more like the early classical symphony which J.C.Bach and his contemporaries were to champion in the

1760s and 70s. The fast - slow - fast layout, as well as the *galant* style then in vogue, with its clear cut phrases and tenderly expressive aspect, points forward to style of Mozart's generation.

On first appearances, it may seem rather odd to be featuring the clarinet in a Baroque programme. In fact, Vivaldi was not averse to employing, as soloists in his concertos, some instruments not normally considered to be worthy of the role. Hence the clarinet and the chalumeaux, the theorbo and the horn are each provided with a considerable amount of concerto material from this most prolific of Baroque composers. After a brief introductory *Larghetto*, the first movement of this *Concerto in C RV 556* displays a forthright directness in the full sections and Vivaldi's customary virtuosity in the solo string parts, particularly the first violin. During the *Largo*, most of the orchestra is silent while the solo violin and cello hint briefly at more complex and daring harmonic language, with the full ensemble returning in the extremely energetic finale.

Like his great contemporary J.S.Bach, Handel was one of the greatest arrangers of both of his own music and that of others. For example, many familiar excerpts from the oratorios such as *Messiah* (the chorus "For unto us") are merely reworkings of earlier vocal pieces. Similarly, the *Concerti a due chori* are orchestral arrangements of some of the vocal movements from the oratorios. The *Orchestral Concerto No3 in D* is constructed in a similar vein, with movements selected from the *Fireworks Music* and *Water Music*.

Series 4, 1998 - Concert No.2, 13 June

Haydn - Symphony No6 in D *Le Matin*
Pisendel - Concerto grosso in F
Mozart - Concertone in C for 2 violins, K.190, Concerto No.1 in B flat for violin, K.207
Telemann - *Ouverture des Nations anciens et modernes*

On first glance, one might question the inclusion of works by composers such as Haydn and Mozart in a baroque series. Many of these 'classical' composers were trained within the late Baroque style, a heritage which is never entirely absent from their later works. Furthermore, the *galant* style which dominates the middle decades of the eighteenth century had its roots in the late baroque, with its tendency to clear phrasing and lighter textures. From the twentieth century musician's viewpoint, this stylistic ambiguity can at times be rather confusing, but the eighteenth century musician would have had no notion whatsoever of a dividing line between so-called 'baroque' and 'classical' styles.

While the extreme points of 1700 and 1800 might display some obvious and undeniable contrasts, the passage between these years is anything but a clearcut course of development. This program of works from this fascinating period might therefore be enjoyed not as an intrusion into a baroque series, but rather as a snapshot of the variety of musical styles employed within the middle generations of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, the predominance of concertos (including a symphony with substantial passages for solo instruments) underlines the fact that certain genres that developed within the baroque did not die out after the mid-18th century, but adapted themselves comparatively easily to the newer styles of the 1760s and 1770s.

Stylistically, Haydn's early symphonies are also very close to the spirit of the baroque. The brilliant trilogy *Le Matin - Le Midi - Le Soir* (Symphony Nos 6-8) features a wealth of soloistic passages more akin to the style of a concerto grosso than a 'classical' orchestral work. In the *Symphony No6 in D Le Matin,* significant solo roles are assigned to the violin, cello, flute and bassoon. Though this work follows the conventional four movement plan, Haydn imbues it with a sense of occasion, by way of a majestic slow introduction which depicts a glowing sunrise. This symphonic progression throughout the times of day concludes with depiction of a summer storm in the finale of *Le Soir*. The combination of orchestral brilliance and pictorial imagery would have delighted Haydn's newfound patrons, the Esterhazy family, for whom these works were probably written, and whom Haydn served from 1761 until his death in 1809.

The baroque musician was normally expected to undertake a variety of roles at various times in his career. Performing and composing were usually considered to be equally important occupations, with the co-requisite of each being part of every musician's training. Sometimes however, the demands made of an outstanding performer left little time for composition - Pisendel is such a case. Acknowledged in his own lifetime as a violinist of the first rank, as well as a fine orchestral director, his obvious talent for composition was curiously undervalued. Eminent composers such as Torelli, Vivaldi, Albinoni, Quantz and Telemann praised his performances, with some of them dedicating solo works to him. However, despite being employed at the musically pre-eminent court of Dresden, Pisendel composed only a small selection of extremely fine chamber and orchestral works. Like much of the musical repertoire that was the sole possession of princely courts in the baroque era, the *Concerto grosso in F* exists only in manuscript in state libraries. Tonight's director, Elizabeth Wallfisch has prepared a performing edition from a facsimile copy of these original sources.

The Bohemian composer Myslivecek, like many of his contemporaries, aspired to achieving success in Italian opera seria, which was one of the greatest hallmarks of the late baroque style. After an undistinguished career in his homeland, he relinquished his family's business interests in pursuit of his fortune south of the Alps. Several major operatic successes in Naples and Venice as well as various financial disasters and amorous affairs ensured that Myslivecek always attracted a certain level of notoriety. However, his musical credentials were enhanced by gaining a diploma from the Academia Filarmonica in Bologna in 1771, at which time he first had contact with Mozart. While the Italian operatic style was an international musical language, Myslivecek's Bohemian background is more evident in some of his instrumental works. The *Violin Concerto in D* however, displays more sympathy with the emerging Austrian classical style, and was claimed by the noted scholar Pincherle to have much in common with Mozart's style.

Mozart was a capable string player, though his preferred instrument was the piano. In fact the piano would become the avenue for his greatest concertos composed in the 1780s in Vienna. The five violin concertos, the *Concertone*, as well as the various solo violin parts in the serenades written for Salzburg during the 1770s are however a product of quite different opportunities and motivations. The *Concertone in C for 2 violins, K.190* is sometimes unfairly with the more mature *Symphonie Concertante* for Violin and Viola K.364, though these two works reveal rather different stimuli. *Concertone* (literally 'large concerto' - ie the presence of two soloists and rather full orchestration) is more light hearted and amiable in tone than its counterpart, being written at a time of relative calm and stability in the composer's career. The full details of the first performance are unclear, but the stylistic influence of Mozart's mentor Johann Christian Bach

is obvious. This perhaps indicates a need to rely on models for guidance in genres which were less well established in his output. Thus the *Concertone* exhibits great clarity of phrasing throughout, and the use of a minuet style in the finale, is rather like many similar works of JC Bach. Of particular interest is the 'intrusion' of other soloists, namely an oboe in the cadenza to the first movement, and a cello in the second movement.

It is unclear who first performed the violin concertos (quite possibly Mozart himself), for they were composed just before the eminent violinist Antonio Brunetti was engaged as Konzertmeister in Salzburg. The studied nature of some of the movements of these works, as well as the intensity of their production (five works in nine months in 1775) indicates a considered effort to grapple with the challenge of the concerto as a genre. The *Concerto No.1 in B flat for violin, K.207* is composed on a modest scale in terms of orchestration and formal development, while the soloist is heard primarily in virtuoso figurations, rather than in thematic passages. Thus one senses the composer's struggle between these various elements in determining the role and character of the soloist's part versus that of the orchestra. For instance, after reiterating the opening theme at its initial entry in the first movement, the solo violin is given primarily to feats of considerable virtuosity such as rapid scale passages and large leaps. However, this is balanced by the lyrical role assigned to the soloist in the second movement, where significant melodic ideas are also heard in the oboes and horns.

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) was one of the most versatile composers of the baroque era. He was one of the longest living composers of his time, whose contemporary fame eclipsed all other musicians then resident in Germany, including J.S.Bach. Telemann was a prolific composer of church music, as well as being active as an organizer of concerts with organisations such as the Leipzig collegium musicum which he also founded. His appreciation for the orchestral genres of the concerto and the overture-suite were therefore firmly based on practical experience. The French style orchestral Ouverture was already well established in German musical centres, but it was Telemann who gave this genre a completely novel aspect, with imaginative programmatic titles. The *Ouverture des Nations anciens et modernes* is a case in point, with its unusual succession of pairs of familiar dances (Menuet and Allemande) as well as some new ones (Suédois and Danois). These dances, with the exception of the menuets, are subtitled *ancien* and *moderne* respectively, with the first of each pair being sedate and courtly, and the other being more vivacious and extrovert. A further curiosity of this work is the final movement *Les vielles femmes* which is full of unstable chromatic harmonies.

Series 4, 1998 - Concert No.3, 11 July

Monteverdi - *Vespers of 1610*

The *Vespers of 1610* holds a unique place in the modern concert repertoire. It is one of very few works from the early seventeenth century to have gained widespread exposure and familiarity. This is no doubt due to the fact that, even for performers and audiences of the late twentieth century, the work retains its freshness, vitality and its sense of exploration. The *Vespers* draws together the best of traditional Renaissance *a capella* counterpoint, as well as the range of innovative techniques that were being developed in the genres of opera, the solo madrigal and aria in the early baroque. This kaleidoscope of styles and textures within a single work has invited great interest to the late twentieth century audience with its eclectic tastes.

Furthermore, audiences who had become accustomed to hearing large-scale oratorios and mass settings by Bach, Handel and their successors have adopted the concept of a 'concert length' work by an earlier composer without reservation. Monteverdi's *Vespers* is however something of a rarity at the time of its composition, where large scale sacred works running to nearly two hours of continuous music were not the norm. The work was in fact composed at the cusp of major stylistic change between two distinct schools of thought, rather than within a well established style. While in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* one senses that the composers has 'arrived' at the culmination of a major stylistic era, with Monteverdi one senses more of a state of flux between contrasting aesthetic positions.

For a variety reasons therefore, performers and audiences have welcomed the inclusion of Monteverdi's *Vespers* as a permanent feature of the repertoire of choirs of various sizes, as well as specialist early music ensembles in more recent decades. The work has also benefitted from universal exposure via a proliferation of recordings that have been produced alongside a wealth of scholarly research and numerous modern performing editions.

Historical background: It appears that Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) intended his monumental publication of sacred music in 1610 to be of particular interest to church authorities in the major centres of Rome and Venice. After a distinguished career as a composer of madrigals and operas at the small but lavishly resourced court of Mantua, the composer was now looking further afield. Continuing difficulties with the conditions of his employment, coupled with personal tragedy with the premature death of his wife, prompted Monteverdi to consider other options. However, in order to prove his worth to an ecclesiastical institution, he needed to demonstrate his familiarity with liturgical music. This facet of musical composition was something which he had not yet had the opportunity to fully explore. The publication of 1610 includes a complex polyphonic mass based on a Gombert motet alongside an elaborate setting of the Marian Vespers - a virtual showcase of an oustandingly versatile composer which more than adequately proved his credentials in the field of church music.

Various scholars have asserted that the Basilica of Maria Barbara in Mantua could well have been the venue of the first performance of the psalm settings in the *Vespers*, whether or not the work was performed complete as per the publication of 1610. A courtly celebration that took place in 1608 could have been one such occasion. While it is possible to discern certain 'Venetian' elements in some of the double choir psalm settings, it is unlikely that Monteverdi focussed his aspirations exclusively on the Basicilica of San Marco. A visit to Rome in 1608 suggests that Monteverdi was actively pursuing opportunities for employment at one of the chapels in the church capital where polychoral music was utilised to a certain extent. However, there is evidence to suggest that Monteverdi used some of the music from his *Vespers* as audition material for his application to the post of music director of St Marks in Venice. Whatever the case, when Monteverdi was eventually appointed to this highly prized position in 1613, his monumental publication would have indeed become rather useful as an anthology of works for liturgical usage.

Structure and Style in the *Vespers*: The *Vespers of 1610* comprises the customary five psalm settings, together with 'concertos' for various combinations of solo voices with continuo. In addition, a *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* for treble voice and instruments, the hymn *Ave maris stella* and two settings of the *Magnificat* are included, all of which fit well within the vespers liturgy. Monteverdi skilfully balances tradition with innovation by employing virtually all the techniques available to a composer in the early years of the seventeenth century.

On the one hand, the oldest contrapuntal technique of all, the *cantus firmus*, is used consistently throughout the work. This provides a sense of cohesion and validates some of the more adventurous sections of the *Vespers*. This approach is most clearly seen in the *Magnificat*, which is a very clear set of variations on the traditional plainchant. Each verse is set as either a chorus, solo duet, or an instrumental interlude, while the clearly audible *cantus firmus* binds the texture together. Monteverdi also employs the *stile antico* Renaissance style of polyphony. For instance, in the setting of the psalm *Dixit Dominus*, alternate stanzas are treated as short motets, with each of the six voice parts moving independently in imitation of each other.

The composer was also conversant with the so-called Venetian school of composition, whereby separate choirs are pitted against each other in dialogue, and in combination at climactic moments. In *Nisi Dominus*, the two four part choirs sing *in alternatim* over an ever-present cantus firmus in the tenor voices, while the opening and conclusion is a more complex refrain in which all ten voice parts participate. Similarily in *Lauda Jerusalem*, the most brilliant of the psalm settings, Monteverdi divides the choir into two halves, each of three parts, together with a single cantus firmus tenor line. These forces present phrases independently at first in alternation, but increasingly the gaps between entrances become shorter, and the work culminates in a brilliant coda for the full ensemble.

The solo writing in this work is as contemporary, and at times as 'secular' as any of Monteverdi's operas or madrigals. Expressive word-setting, with a sparse accompaniment allowing maximum freedom of interpretation, is evident throughout. The solo concerto movements are virtually sacred madrigals, particularly since several of the texts are taken from the Song of Songs, which is full of sensual overtones. As might be expected in such circumstances, there are several instances of word-painting, such as in the motet for three solo tenors *Duo Seraphim.* At the point where the text refers to the theology of the trinity, the three voices are heard in harmony followed by a phrase in unison. At other times, brilliant virtuoso skill is demanded of the soloists, quite frequently in duet sections for two sopranos or two tenors.

Recent Research regarding performance practices in the *Vespers*: The intense scrutiny that this popular work has attracted has yielded some interesting outcomes in recent years. No longer can one consider this work to be an appropriate vehicle for large choral societies and orchestras of exclusively 'modern' instruments, though this was the medium in which the *Vespers* first gained widespread exposure. Recent scholarship has determined that the majority of the vocal writing in the *Vespers* is in fact soloistic rather than choral in conception. This approach, if adopted consistently, solves many of the problems which are encountered when one attempts to divide various sections of the work between soloist and choir(s). Also, various anomalies such as the rare appearances of an alto or third tenor soloist disappear when a primarily chamber music approach is employed. The choice of voice types is another major concern, since the alto parts are frequently placed no higher than the tenor lines and are difficult to project with female alto singers in a typical modern choir. However, this darker toned palette was indeed the sound world of a cathedral choir in northern Italy in Monteverdi's day, which at times could even replace the boy trebles with male falsettists or castrati.

Secondly, it is now clear that the appropriate instrumental ensemble for the work is one which avoids doubling of various players on the vocal lines. Monteverdi calls for specific instruments (apart from the omnipresent continuo group) in only five movements of the work - the opening Introit (which is based on his memorable Toccata from *Orfeo*), the ritornellos in *Dixit Dominus* and *Ave Maris stella,* the *Sonata* and various sections of the seven part setting of the *Magnificat.* In the latter, prominent solo passages are assigned pairs of cornetti, violins, recorders and sackbuts. Thus less than one quarter of the entire work requires the participation of the full instrumental ensemble, with the bulk of the *Vespers* being more suited to the accompaniment of a fully equipped continuo group. In this connection, the modern conceptions of what is appropriate performance practice has moved away from the previously held notion that a sustaining string instrument is compulsory in continuo parts in early baroque music. The harpsichord was probably not envisaged at all in the *Vespers*, since it appears that the composer's preferred disposition of the continuo group is one or more organs along with various larger members of the lute family.

A further point of contention is the internal evidence that *Lauda Jerusalem* and the *Magnificat* were intended to be performed at a pitch lower than that notated in the original score. It is clear on the original publication that the so-called *chiavette* (small or high clefs) indicate a transposition downwards. Both these movements appear rather out of character in comparison to their neighbours unless this principle is adopted, since the vocal ranges are exceptionally high, in fact much higher than the accepted norms of the day. Thus, despite the temptation to treat both of these movements as brilliant concluding movements to each half of a concert performance of the *Vespers*, they in fact should be heard in a more restrained tone, and probably should be pitched a fourth lower.

The *Vespers* in Modern Editions and Recordings: All of the considerations noted above beg the question as to what performing edition should be employed in the pursuit of Monteverdi's original conception of the *Vespers of 1610*. Editors have tackled these problems over the last seventy five years, but with varying degrees of success. Tonight's performance is based on the Jürgen Jürgens edition which appeared in the late 1970's. This version provides a significant amount of orchestral material in addition to that which was scored by the composer, and tends to make arbitrary choices regarding the use of solo voices versus choral sections. Jürgens also retains the higher keys for the *Lauda Jerusalem* and *Magnificat*, and reorders the movements so as to conclude with the *Magnificat*, despite this being contrary to liturgical convention. Following on from the considerable scholarly research efforts in the 1980s, the recent editions by Jeremy Roche for Eulenberg and Clifford Bartlett for Kings Music provide versions that are considered to be more reliable in terms of the concerns noted above. These editions also provide a more appropriate resource for

smaller ensembles of primarily solo voices and period instruments, as they aim to preserve the composer's scoring in tact with as little editorial interference as possible.

For those interested in investigating the *Vespers of 1610* via recordings, one might first seek out the comprehensive survey was undertaken recently by Bruce Wood for the BBC Music Magazine (November 1997). Significantly, this article recommends the version directed by Andrew Parrott with the Taverner Consort and Players in 1984 as the most stylistic as well as the most well informed performance of all those surveyed. Having first become acquainted with the work via the overtly romantic recording by Michel Corboz (1967), and later being captivated by the technical brilliance of the performance by John Eliot Gardiner (1990), the current writer now tends to agree with Wood. For sheer clarity and precision, stylistic awareness, as well as sensitivity to liturgical concerns, Parrott's recording is without peer, even fifteen years after its first release.

Such is the attraction of a work like the *Vespers of 1610,* as it merits constant re-evaluation and investigation from its devotees. Despite the problems of mounting a fully period instrument performance, one looks forward to such an interpretation should such resources become available in our local context. Tonight's performance is based on one possible interpretation and realisation of the score among many available alternatives. Listeners will of course decide for themselves regarding the effectiveness of this version or any other, as they do with any item in the current repertoire. However, Monteverdi's original conception is so brilliant that its grandeur and brilliance will communicate across nearly four centuries, despite the enticing challenges it poses for the modern musician.

Series 5, 1999 - Concert No.1, 11 March

Vivaldi - Concerto in G RV 151 *Alla Rustica*, *Summer (l'Estate)* RV 315 from *The Four Seasons*, Concerto for Guitar (Mandolin) in C RV 425
JS Bach - Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in D for Guitar (Lute) BWV 998, *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* from Cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben* BWV 147, Concerto in C minor for Oboe, Violin and Strings BWV 1060

Tonight's program focuses on the works of Vivaldi and J.S.Bach, two of the most well known icons of the late Baroque period. This pairing is a most satisfying one for listeners and performers alike, as these composers' careers, and in particular their orchestral music, have much in common. Both men were employed for much of their professional life as an in-house composer-director within educational or religious institutions. Each produced a large body of repertoire for their own immediate use within these institutions, and they were known beyond their immediate locality, though they travelled very infrequently. Furthermore, both composers were virtuoso performers on their chosen instrument, a mastery which is clearly heard in Vivaldi's violin works and those of Bach for keyboard.

A most notable case of stylistic cross-fertilisation is that of the young Bach who was working in the small court of Weimar during the 1710s. His compositional style was transformed by contact with Vivaldi's scores, particularly that composer's Op.3. Both through transcription, arrangement, and imitation, Bach incorporated the Italianate concerto idiom into his musical language alongside distinctive features that are more firmly rooted in his German heritage.

One of the most natural expectations of a concerto is that there will be either a single soloist, or as in the baroque *concerto grosso*, a small *concertino* group of between 2 and 4 players. However, in certain works such as Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No.3* all the participants are soloists, while in a small group of concertos by Vivaldi, there are no solo passages at all. These so-called *concerto ripieno* (the latter term referring the full ensemble as opposed to the solo *concertino* group) exhibit all the characteristics of rhythmic vitality, motoric driving energy and instrumental brilliance, but without the focus on soloistic virtuosity. Vivaldi's Concerto in G RV 151 *Alla Rustica* is the best known example of this genre. In recent times has become almost as familiar as the *Four Seasons*, probably due to its captivating triplet rhythms of the opening movement, in the style of a rustic tarantella. The bright and clear writing in G major, which pervades the work, is leavened by a few harmonic surprises in the finale, which is a heavy-footed dance of rejoicing.

The Four Seasons is a musical phenomenon virtually without parallel in the modern concert repertoire. These four programmatic concertos were originally published in 1725 as Op.8 'The Trial of Harmony and Invention' and became widely known in the mid-18th century. Various concertos such as *Spring* were performed many times at the Concerts Spirituels in Paris from the 1730s onwards. As the most public manifestation of the Vivaldi revival of the post World War II era, *The Four Seasons* has inexorably risen to the status of a 'hit tune'. The discography of this work now exceeds 200 complete recorded versions, let alone the frequent live performances, and the numerous arrangements and reworkings to be heard in cinema soundtracks, television commercials and piped music. A second wave of *Four Seasons* mania occurred during the 1990s, with about twenty recordings or re-releases per year, including increasing numbers of interpretations on period instruments.

Programmatic or descriptive works tend to strike a ready chord with the listener, more so than works that have a generic title. The expectations of vivid pictorialism raised by *Summer (l'Estate)* RV 315 from *The Four Seasons* are more than adequately fulfilled with some brilliant flashes of inspiration. Whereas *Spring* and *Autumn* portray bucolic joy and contentment, *Summer* and *Winter* tend to focus on the human reaction to the extremes of climate. The sonnets which accompany each of the concertos in *The Four Seasons* are of disputed authorship, they are quite likely by Vivaldi himself, who is known to have created texts for his vocal works on occasion. The first movement vacillates between languid chords (depicting the human reaction to the hot summer winds blowing up from the Sahara), realistic birdcalls (cuckoo, turtledove and goldfinch), and hints of a storm on the horizon. The unsettled feelings caused by thunder and lightning and the pestering swarms of blowflies is depicted in the slow movement - here a plaintive solo violin melody is accompanied by sparsely scored dotted rhythms, interrupted by a few short and nervous orchestral interjections. At last the storm unleashes its fury in the finale, which is full of rushing scale patterns and angular solo phrases.

Vivaldi wrote only a few concertos for the various plucked string instruments. However, his oeuvre is noteworthy for a small but significant number of works composed for the less 'soloistic' or emerging instruments, such as the chalumeau, viola d'amore, bassoon and horn. In the case of the mandolin, Vivaldi quite possibly deferred to the musical tastes of the Marchese Guido Bentivoglio d'Aragona in Ferrara, who was known to admire this instrument. A letter from late 1736 implies that this patron could well have been the reason for Vivaldi composing both the *Concerto for Mandolin in C RV 425* and the *Concerto for 2 Mandolins in G RV 532*. The C major concerto features the characteristic note repetition technique of this instrument, both in the solo part and orchestral passages. Each of the movements provides opportunities for the soloist to speak clearly, with either very limited continuo accompaniment, or lightly scored

chords. The slow movement in particular allows the solo instrument to be heard prominently, as here it leads the ensemble with a distinctive melody in dotted rhythms.

Vivaldi similarly employed both the lute in normal tuning and the much larger theorbo in only a limited number of works. Three concertos feature a member of the lute family, including the well known *Concerto for Lute in D RV 93.* In many ways the writing is uncharacteristic of the lute, whose potential for counterpoint and chordal writing was exploited by various baroque composers . Instead, the higher register predominates, with a single note style, which is more reminiscent of the violin and other treble instruments. The scoring is extremely light, with only 2 violin parts and continuo, so it is quite possible that the composer envisaged a chamber music rendition. Each of the movements is in binary form, with each half repeated - thus the conventional ritornello / solo alternation so typical of Vivaldi's concertos is somewhat absent. The slow movement is one of Vivaldi's best known creations, no doubt due to the lyrical style of the solo line, and the veiled accompaniment provided by muted string chords. The world of dance is apparent in the finale, which is very much in the style of a gigue, with its characteristic bouncing triplet figures.

Bach's output for the lute is not extensive, but has become familiar to devotees of the guitar through transcriptions by Segovia and others. One of the finest works from this small pocket of Bach's huge catalogue is the *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in D for Guitar (Lute) BWV 998*. For technical reasons, the key of the original lute version is less well suited to the guitar. It is better known via the practice of transposition to D major initiated by Segovia in 1935, which was soon taken up by performers such as John Williams and Julian Bream. The stylistic connections between the harpsichord and lute were self-evident to baroque composers - in fact many works sound equally well on a plucked keyboard instrument as they do on a plucked string instrument. The great 20th century pioneer of the harpsichord, Wanda Landowska proved this in her 1946 recording of the work in question, BWV 998. She later referred to it as 'incomparable beauty… inspired, spontaneous, without a moment of arduous elaboration'.

The lively opening of the Prelude in 12/8 time initiates a series of statements in various related keys, climaxing in bell-like tones in the upper register. As Bach demonstrated in his solo violin sonatas, it is possible for a string instrument to successfully perform counterpoint - the fugue section of this work similarly keeps the various lines clear and distinct, with the main musical idea recurring frequently as a binding device. The final Allegro section is gigue-like, with brilliant triplet passages. This effective work is one of the highlights of Bach's solo repertoire for any instrument.

Several individual movements from Bach's numerous cantatas have made it into the 'top ten' of his best known works. *Sheep may safely graze* (Cantata 208) and *Sleepers awake* (Cantata 140) ***and Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (Cantata 147)*** are all examples of a single movement excerpt becoming far more familiar than the rest of the work from which it derives. *Jesu, Joy* is a chorale setting, whereby the phrases of the hymn tune appear intermittently in chordal style, while the instrumental line dominates the texture throughout. This technique of elaboration upon a chorale tune was well established by Bach's generation, but he was a master at creating more than just a foil for the melody. The genius of this particular work is that the hymn tune is implied in the elaboration itself - if one extracted the main notes out of the first few bars of the instrumental introduction, the contour of the hymn becomes clear. The cantata Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben BWV 147 was first performed on the Feast of the Visitation of Mary, 2nd July in Leipzig in 1723. The movement familiarly known as *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* music appears twice, at mid-point and also at the conclusion of the work. Tonight's performance is an orchestral arrangement in which the original choral phrases are played by the wind section.

Bach's choice of instrument for the numerous solo concertos is restricted to the harpsichord, the violin and the oboe. However, it is largely due to his interest in constantly re-arranging his own works, that modern musicians have access to those for violin and oboe. The original versions of at least 2 oboe concertos and 4 violin concertos are lost, as is that of the *Concerto in C minor for Oboe, Violin and Strings BWV 1060*. These and other works have been preserved in a later reincarnation as concertos for harpsichord(s) composed for performances with the Leipzig Collegium Musicum. Thus the work being heard tonight exists both in a version for two harpsichords, and in the better known 'original' version (which has lately achieved mass-media status in Australia as the signature tune for a national radio program). Within the first movement, the characterisation of the oboe as an expressively melodic voice is contrasted with the violin, which is given to more active figurations. As is often the case with a Bach concerto, the slow movement vies for one's attention as the focal point of the work, with its seemingly endless arabesque of melodic invention for the two equally important solo instruments. To further highlight the solo lines, the orchestral strings provide a discreet *pizzicato* accompaniment. The assertive character of the work's opening returns in the finale, which exhibits all of the drive and purpose normally seen in a first movement, in addition to an unflagging contribution by each of the soloists.

Series 5, 1999 - Concert No.2, 8 April

JS Bach - Orchestral Suite No.1 in C BWV 1066, Partita in A minor for Solo Flute BWV 1013

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) composed his four Orchestral Suites not as a set (such as the *Brandenburg* Concertos), but over a twenty year period. The *Orchestral Suite in C BWV 1066* dates from Bach's tenure in Cöthen (1717-23), a time when he was primarily involved with instrumental composition. Bach had already begun to explore the potential of the suite as a keyboard genre with a pronounced French influence, and so in this orchestral work he adopts a similar viewpoint. In fact, the four orchestral suites were designated *Ouverture* owing to their grand first movements. The Ouverture was developed in the court of Louis XIV as the introduction to an opera or ballet. It normally consists of a stately opening full of strongly dotted rhythms followed by a faster passage in fugal style. Bach observes all of these conventions, adding a touch of colour contrast in the solo passages for the two oboes and bassoon. Each of the dances that follow is also unmistakably French in derivation. Of interest is the preponderance of "optional" dances - only the Courante remains from the standard layout of suite movements. The Gavotte, Menuet, Bourrée, Passepied and Forlane are not unheard of in Bach's suites, but rarely do they appear together in such a combination as this, which emphasises their fast tempos, sprung rhythms and light textures.

This work was most probably composed by Bach in Cöthen around 1720, a time when he was absorbed with the challenges of writing for orchestral and chamber ensembles of varying sizes and instrumentation. Though the title on the manuscript reads *Solo pour la Flute traversiere par J.S.Bach*, it is unclear which instrument or player Bach envisaged. Since the technical demands of Bach's flute parts in other works from this period are not particularly difficult, it is assumed that he had in mind the great French virtuoso Pierre Gabriel Buffardin, then principal flautist in Dresden. The Allemande in particular presents notorious difficulties for the performer, due to the extremely long phrases, and the lack of obvious breathing places. Only at the end of each half of this movement is there a (brief) opportunity for repose, and the second section calls for the highest note of the instrument! Quite possibly this movement was first composed for a stringed or keyboard instrument, and therefore it does not exhibit Bach's usual sensitivity to the requirements of idiomatic writing.

Throughout the work, Bach succeeds at giving an impression of both harmony and counterpoint, even within the instrument's limitation to a single note at a time. Whereas the solo violin and cello works can at times include harmonic sections with multiple stopping of several strings at once, the flute relies on resonance and overtones to give a similar impression of the harmony. Therefore, the instrument required to negotiate various large leaps (Corrente and Bourrée Anglaise) which enable the player to hint at pedal points and part writing. The Sarabande is by way of contrast a more settled movement, though here also the extremities of range are engaged to provide a sense of spaciousness.

Series 5, 1999 - Concert No.3, 28 October

Handel – Allegro and March from *Scipione*, *Silete venti*
Mozart - *Lieve sono al par del vento* from *Il sogno di Scipione*

Handel and Mozart have much in common. Each represents a culmination of the era in which they worked, and both created some of the finest examples of the major musical genres of their day. Both Handel's and Mozart's careers evolved in similar ways – they were German-speaking composers whose major career goal was to compose operas and other works in the Italian style. In order to achieve this, they took leave from their relatively stable positions of employment to travel to Italy for study and performance opportunities.

Handel's initial sojourn took place during 1707-9 when he was already an experienced composer, and therefore in a position to take up commissions for operas, church music and secular cantatas with confidence. He was also feted as an equal alongside some of the finest musicians of the day in Rome and Venice such as Corelli. Later visits in search of solo singers for his London productions also kept him in touch with developments in Italian music since the time of his original sojourn. Mozart, on the other hand, first travelled to Italy in the 1770s while he was still a teenager. It was his initial intention was to study with one of the great teachers in Bologna, but his status as a prodigy also ensured that commissions soon followed. Once his apprentice years and his three transalpine trips to Italy were over, Mozart did not return to Italy. He however continued to work within the Italian style in Vienna and other cities where this style was cultivated.

While the two composers never met (Handel had died by the time the Mozart family arrived in London in 1762), their works have many stylistic features in common. Both men were undoubted masters of Italian opera in the eighteenth century, and this facility overflowed into much of their output in other vocal and instrumental genres.

Handel's opera seria *Scipione* was composed at the height of his popularity, as the leading Italian opera composer resident in London in the 1720s. After major successes with works such as *Giulio Cesare, Tamerlano* and *Rodelinda* in quick succession during 1724-25, and with fine performers at his disposal such as the prima donna Cuzzoni and the castrato Senesino, the triumph of *Scipione* at its premiere in March 1726 seemed assured. However, the rather unconvincing portrayal of the protagonist meant that the work did not survive as one of Handel's best known theatrical works. These observations aside, the opening scene from which the *Allegro and March* being performed tonight are taken is one of the work's most memorable scenes. Announcing the mood of triumph of Scipio over the Spaniards at the opening of the opera, a heroic march in G major sets a very positive tone. Rather surprisingly, Handel does not call for trumpets in this 'military' work, instead relying on the high-pitched natural horns in order to create a festive mood - perhaps he was consciously recalling a similar effect he had success with in the concluding scenes from *Giulio Cesare* only two years previously.

After becoming part of the English musical establishment, Handel made occasional visits to the sites of his former triumphs in Italy and Germany, thus confirming his reputation as an accomplished cosmpolitan composer. The solo motet *Silete venti* was composed during the 1720s, though there is disagreement as to the occasion for which it might have been written. Contenders include one of Handel's erstwhile patrons in Rome, Cardinal Colonna (around 1724), or perhaps Handel's visit to Venice (in 1729). Despite such minor problems of verification, it is clear that by this stage in his career Handel was able to skilfully merge the genres of secular solo cantata, sacred oratorio and opera as he deemed appropriate. Strictly speaking this work is a solo motet, but it conforms to the conventional pattern of the contemporary secular cantata, with two pairs of the conventional recitative and aria format. The work gains in stature from its inclusion of an opening bipartite overture (a convention observed in most of Handel's operas and oratorios), and is duly 'sanctified' by an elaborate concluding Alleluia section. The dramatist is never far from the surface however, most notably at the first vocal entry where the bustling passage work of the overture is interrupted by 'Sileti venti' (Silence, winds!). The connecting points between Handel and Mozart noted above are also evident in reference to this work. A generation later the younger composer Mozart was to write during a visit to Italy his well-known solo motet *Exsultate jubilate* for coloratura soprano, a standard mid 18th century orchestra of strings and oboes, and like the Handel work, also concluding with a brilliant 'Alleluia'.

Despite his obvious affinity with the opera buffa genre, Mozart was not always at liberty to choose the genre or plot outline when writing his early theatrical works. *Il sogno di Scipione* is the result of a commission for the arrival in Salzburg of the newly appointed Archbishop Collaredo in April 1772. Writing to his patron's expectations was something which Mozart increasingly grew to despise, and this was partially the cause of his notorious removal from the Archbishop's court less than ten years' later. History has not been kind to Collaredo because of these later events. However, when viewed from the viewpoint of contemporary conventions and customs, he is probably a reasonable employer was quite reasonable in terms of his expectations of his resident musicians. Mozart was not yet seventeen years of age, and so working to order with a text by Mestastasio, Europe's most famed opera librettist for such an

important civic occasion was certainly not without its benefits. The protagonist in this case is not Publius Cornelius Scipio (the topic of Handel's 1726 opera), but rather Scipio Africanus the Younger, and the 'action' involves little more than a play off between the various treasures offered by Fortune and Constancy. The aria *Lieve sono al par del vento* occurs near the beginning of the work and is sung by the allegorical figure of Fortune. It is a typical showcase for the coloratura voice, with a degree of word painting evident. The references to being wayward in emotion, alternating between rage and calm gives rise to many passages of brilliant vocal flourishes.

Series 6, 2000 - Concert No.1

Purcell – Excerpts from *The Fairy Queen*
Biber – *Battaglia*, *Pauern Kirchfahrt*
Vivaldi - Bassoon Concerto in e minor RV 484,Concerto in b minor for 4 violins and strings Op.3 No.10
Albinoni – Concerto for 2 oboes and strings in C Op.9 No.9

Henry Purcell (1659-95) outranks all other English-born composers of the Baroque. In recent decades, his works have been accorded with both wide exposure and a timely re-evaluation. After *Dido and Aeneas*, his 'semi-opera' *The Fairy Queen* is clearly his most revered stage work. At the time of its composition in 1692, English audiences and composers had yet to fully experience and accept the styles of Italian opera that would bring composers such as Handel to London in the early 18th century. Thus theatrical works before 1700 are an interesting amalgam of the English *masque*, incidental music to spoken stage plays, the French courtly *ballet* and more superficially elements of fully-sung *opera.*

Loosely based upon Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Purcell's setting of 1692 is almost a complete opera in itself, amounting to more than two hours of music. However, the events of the play are only alluded to - none of dialogue or any of the play's many characters finds a place in *The Fairy Queen.* Instead, the varying moods of the play are given a musical presentation, with frequent appearances of allegorical figures who enlighten the story, and regular interpolations of dance sequences. Thus one can extract any single element - the choruses, the songs or as in tonight's peformance, the dances and instrumental interludes, and still be left with a satisfying entity. The suite from *The Fairy Queen* compiled by Nikolaus Harnoncourt provides an overview of one of Purcell's most colourful and inventive scores.

At times the Baroque composer was given to flights of fancy, producing unconventional works that defy the normal categorisations. Such a piece is *Battaglia* composed by Heinrich Biber in 1673. This remarkable Austrian composer is renowned for experimentation with unusual instrumental effects, particularly in his *Mystery* violin sonatas. Scored for a 9 part string ensemble, *Battaglia* depicts, through a series of descriptive character pieces, the progress of events surrounding a mock battle. A vigorous opening section, replete with trumpet like fanfares, is followed by a *quodiblet* of eight distinct tunes, depicting a community singing and drinking session. Of special interest is the melody *Kraut und Rüben*, played by the third violin. This tune also appears in another famous quodiblet at the conclusion of JS Bach's *Goldberg* variations. Mars, the god of war, is depicted by a vigorous solo violin accompanied by a 'rattling' effect in the double bass, produced by placing paper underneath the strings. After a tearful Aria, the battle ensues, with imitations of cannon fire between two basses who are instructed to slap the strings against the body of the instrument (premonitions of Bartok nearly 300 years later). Battle pieces are not unknown before Biber - a well known chanson by Jannequin creates similar effects with voices alone, while Monteverdi's *Il Combattimento* includes a battle scene composed for a quartet of strings. It is possible however, that Biber's direct model was a *Capriccio Stravagante* published in 1626 by Farina, and dedicated to the Duke of Saxony.

While it is less dynamic than *Battalia*, the *Pauern Kirchfahrt (Peasant's Church Procession)* presents a similar storyline. The participants (in this case simple village folk) gather for a rural processional feast-day – here the opening Sonata in 6 string parts presents various melodic lines which converge on a strong cadence just as the people might have gathered. The ensuing unison melody, which alternates between higher and lower instruments is composed rather in the style of a litany or musical prayer, with audible repetitions of similar phrases, and without a sense of dramatic climax or musical goal. Such processions of singing pilgrims would have been familiar to residents of 17th century Austria, whose rural landscape is dotted with many pilgrimage sites and shrines. The calendar of religious feast days at this time was also quite extensive, with many saints being honoured throughout the liturgical year. The pilgrimage arrives at the church, where the sound of the organ is hinted at by the use of string bow vibrato (measured repetitions of a single note), followed by a hymn and a dance finale during which the more extrovert festivities of the gathered company might be imagined.

During the early 18th century, the bassoon was beginning to emerge as a solo instrument, after having proved its worth as a member of the continuo section. However, its capabilities as a concerto soloist were not fully realised until Vivaldi produced the approximately forty concertos attributed to him. Visitors to his Venetian workplace, the Ospedalle della Pieta, commented on the versatility of the female students who were able to master any instrument – frequently it was the bassoon that was singled out for special comment in this regard. Recent research has broadened this perception to include the possibility that some of Vivaldi's concertos were composed for his patrons elsewhere in Europe. This evidence, as well as the texture of the *Bassoon Concerto in e minor RV 484* suggest that it is a late work. While retaining the customary three movements, Vivaldi brings a freshness of approach to the themes of both soloist and orchestra – relative disposition of the normally high violins and the rather wide range of the soloist provide some unusual scoring combinations. Also, within the slow movement, where the scoring normally reduces to a chamber ensemble, the fuller instrumentation of the outer movements is retained

Albinoni's career parallels that of Vivaldi in several significant aspects. Both were born in Venice and remained active there for the majority of their careers, even though they eventually gained universal acclaim via the publication of their works in northern Europe. Both composers also worked for brief periods outside of Venice. The concerto in its various guises also provides the bulk of each composer's output and posthumous reputation, although they were also skilled composers of chamber music, vocal music and opera. Both were prolific composers, but in the case of Vivaldi this was largely due to the constant demand for new works by his students and patrons. Albinoni, in contrast came from a wealthy Venetian family of independent means, and so his musical pursuits were less tied to a daily routine, but rather grew out of his personal interests and opportunities.

In addition to more than 50 operas and nearly as many solo cantatas, Albinoni published 5 sets of concertos and symphonies (12 works in each) for various combinations between 1700 and the late 1730s. Featured prominently in the works of Op.7 and Op.9 is the oboe as a solo instrument, which has ensured that the composer has retained a particular niche amongst performers. The solo writing in the quicker movements of the *Concerto for 2 oboes and strings in C Op.9 No.9* features the instrument in a characteristic vein, but does not greatly differentiate the winds from the strings in terms of style. Instead, Albinoni skilfully places each group of instruments in clear relief from each by rarely requiring the oboes to play in unison with the strings. The oboes are therefore rather treated as a solo 'group' within the busy rhythmic texture. Themes, which are first introduced by the strings as (supposedly) the principal idea of a movement, will become the countermelody to the oboes' themes during the soloistic sections. During the slow middle movement, the oboes are more closely aligned to the strings, where the broadly melodic conception in enriched by skilful interplay of the inner parts. It is this aspect of enrichment of the slow movement which makes Albinoni's later concertos rise to a high level of artistic maturity, equalling that of his more famous contemporary Vivaldi.

More than any other single collection, it was his Op.3 *L'Estro Armonico* (Harmonic inspiration) that established Vivaldi's international reputation. Published in Amsterdam in 1711, this set of 12 works for either one, two, or four violins and string ensemble (4 concertos for each combination) was an immediate success and inspired many composers outside of Italy to adopt the newer styles emanating from northern Italy. No less a composer than J.S.Bach was one of these, who at the time he was working in the relatively isolated provincial court of Weimar. The dynamic energy and rhythmic drive of Vivaldi's Op.3 was to become a decisive influence in his subsequent works. The particular work being performed today is also available in a transcription for 4 harpsichords and strings by J.S.Bach, but transposed to a minor – a remarkable feat of assimilation and transference to a new medium.

Four of the works from this collection are scored for the unusual combination of 4 violins and strings, but it is the *Concerto in b minor Op.3 No.10* which stands out as being particularly inspired. Vivaldi would have been accustomed to the so-called 'Venetian' style of displacing multiple choirs of various instruments and voices in opposition to one another, both physically and aurally. However, the problem of presenting four equal instruments in relief from one another within a single work presents a particular challenge. At times one of the soloists is provided with its own phrase while the others remain silent or accompany discreetly, while elsewhere rapid interchanges of statements of a single bar or even less provide great excitement and tension. Another example of creative resolution of the problems of texture is found in the slow movement. Here, all four solo instruments rapidly alternate with one another by playing various notes of a single chord, but in such a way as to create a continuous harmonic effect, more akin to the minimalist approach of recent decades of our own era.

Series 6, 2000 - Concert No.2

Albinoni - Adagio in g minor
Telemann - Concerto for Flute and Violin in A from *Tafelmusik*
JS Bach - *Badinerie* from Orchestral Suite No.2 in b minor, *Air* from Orchestral Suite No.3 in D
Förster - Concerto for Horn and Strings in E-flat
Pachelbel - Canon and Gigue
Vivaldi – Concerto in A minor for 2 violins and strings Op.3 No.8 RV 522

This evening's program juxtaposes some of the modern-day 'top ten hits' of the baroque with several lesser known concertos for various instrumental combinations. Each of the 'hits' is a memorable miniature whose innate charm has endeared it to audiences far beyond the concert hall, in particular to devotees of cinema. As for the concerted works, tonight's audience will be treated to an opportunity to discover something of works and composers which deserve to better known.

Albinoni's career parallels that of Vivaldi, his most famous contemporary. Both were born in Venice and remained active there for most of their careers. They both eventually gained universal acclaim via the publication of their works in northern Europe. Both composers also worked for brief periods outside of Venice. The concerto in its various guises also provides the bulk of each composer's output and posthumous reputation, although they were also skilled composers of chamber music, vocal music and opera. Both were prolific composers, but in the case of Vivaldi this was largely due to the constant demand for new works by his students and patrons. Albinoni, in contrast came from a wealthy Venetian family of independent means, and so his musical pursuits were less tied to a daily routine, but rather grew out of his personal interests and opportunities. In addition to more than 50 operas and nearly as many solo cantatas, Albinoni published 5 sets of concertos and symphonies (12 works in each) for various combinations between 1700 and the late 1730s. Featured prominently in the works of Op.7 and Op.9 is the oboe as a solo instrument, which has ensured that the composer has retained a particular niche amongst performers to this day.

The so-called *Adagio in g minor* is a modern 'reconstruction' of fragments of Albinoni, rather than a bona fide work in its own right. Neither is it a designated organ solo throughout, as some references to it on recording albums might suggest. These errors of fact have not in any way limited its growth in popularity in recent years, a phenomenon which has ensure that Albinoni's name (like that of Pachelbel) will retain a permanent place in the collective psyche. Musically, the *Adagio* embodies in its plaintive phrases and relentless pulse one of the most characteristic genres of the baroque, the *lament*. The darker tones of the strings, particularly the phrases played on the lower strings of the violins, adds to the markedly sombre mood.

Telemann's reputation has been steadily on the increase in the last fifty years through a wider dissemination and understanding of his voluminous output, which covers every compositional genre of his era. The *Tafelmusik* series, which were published in Hamburg in 1733, is one such series which has now become established as part of the standard repertoire. It comprises 18 instrumental works composed in the international styles of the French Ouverture, Concerto grosso, and the Sonata for various combinations. The democratic approach adopted by Telemann, in which each genre was exemplified in this series by only 3 works, indicates that the composer did not ally himself to any one national school. He is equally at home with Italian, French and German styles.

The *Concerto for Flute and Violin in A from Tafelmusik* is not in the typical 3 movement Fast-Slow-Fast plan popularised by Vivaldi and J.S.Bach. The opening slow movement is more akin to the *Sonata da chiesa* (church sonata) format, though the potentially serious mood is somewhat alleviated by floating melodies in triplet rhythms played by the soloists. One could perhaps interpret this movement as an extended introduction to the work proper, but its large scale concept demands our concentration. Both of the fast movements (2nd movement and finale) are structure in Da Capo form, whereby the opening section returns after a contrasting middle section – the aural impact however is not dissimilar from a Vivaldian concerto where one expects to hear the opening ritornello again in full as a culminating device. Largely absent are the perpetual driving rhythms of Vivaldi – Telemann is much more varied in his use of melodic and rhythmic materials, often with surprising results. The 3rd movement does not attempt to retrace the same territory as the opening slow movement – the designation 'gratioso', and the French-style lilting melodic patterns indicate that this is more of a 'divertissement' from the main action. The work is nominally scored for two solo treble instruments, but listeners should also be prepared for various significant contributions from the principal cello – at times the solo trio combination becomes a chamber music ensemble in its own right, accompanied by the strings and continuo.

For many devotees of the music of J.S.Bach, it is his larger instrumental - vocal works and keyboard solo works that are responsible for his 'major composer' status. His wider popularity however is largely based on a significant number of single movements from such larger works (instantly recognisable and memorable because of their melody and/or their

title), which have created a performance tradition all of their own. These excerpts have been arranged and re-arranged for all possible instrumental combinations, even extending to scat vocalised versions by ensembles such as the Swingle Singers, and electronically synthesised 'switched on' versions. J.S.Bach himself was on of the greatest arrangers and musical recyclers of all time, both of his own music and that of others – he would no doubt have approved of these transformations and revisions of his own 'hits'.

Two of J.S.Bach's most well known single movements are to be found within his orchestral suites: *the Badinerie from the 2nd Suite in b minor* and the Air from the 3rd Suite in D. The *Badinerie* is a rare dance form, the title being derived from French words for jesting or 'a trifle'. Musically, Bach's example is a very fast gavotte, and as such provides a brilliant conclusion to the Suite. The the solo flute is featured in virtuoso mode while the strings accompany with light chords. The *Air* has often been subtitled 'on the G string' because a certain violinist made a feature of performing it in that manner, namely on the lowest string of the instrument. Stylistically, it is a very Italianate slow movement, with many flourishes and ornaments filling out the very simple melodic contours. The accompanying parts to the treble line are either quite static (holding long notes) or provide a subdued sense of rhythmic pulse (the 'walking' bass line).

Christoph Förster is a little known contemporary of J.S.Bach. He worked for many years from 1717 onwards as a court musician in Merseburg, a neighbouring town to Leipzig. His musical output is quite large, and typically for a court musician of the period, encompasses cantatas (sacred and secular), chamber music, concertos and overtures. Similarly to Telemann (see above), an international approach is evident, with French traits discernible alongside German and Italian influences. Unfortunately, much of Förster's music can not be officially designated as such, due to the absence of indisputable autographs on the manuscripts – such was the fate of a baroque musician composing to commission rather than with a view towards posterity.

The *Concerto for Horn and Strings in E-flat* is a welcome addition to the baroque horn solo repertoire. The solo writing demonstrates a generational shift away from the purely 'rustic' horn call patterns towards a more lyrically melodic approach. Given the limitations of the natural horn, this work is remarkable for the fluency of solo writing, and the variety of figurations which have been crafted into the melodic line, particularly in the first and second movements. The finale is contrasted by a faster tempo and more energetic rhythmic motives – here the solo part takes on more of a fanfare quality, as well as increasing the melodic range used and the virtuoso demands.

Similarly to the Bach works described above, Pachelbel's name has become familiar to several generations of music lovers via a single short work, namely the ubiquitous *Canon (and Gigue)*. Composers from all periods have delighted in the challenge of composing an extended melody which can be heard simultaneously with itself in multiple voices, each entering in stages. Very few, however, have undertaken the dual challenge of combining this quite rigorous technique with that of the ostinato or ground bass, which is an equally unyielding formula of repetitions, normally to be found in the bass line. One wonders whether the legions of listeners who have heard this work in one of its many guises as a modern day baroque 'hit' have been aware of this compositional *tour de force.* The melodic writing for 3 violin parts is certainly well crafted. Growing out of some very simple lyrical ideas (for example the first four notes of a descending scale), a clear sense of climax accumulates with a gradual building up of the texture, increasing rhythmic energy, and gradually higher melodic range. Binding all of this together are the 28 statements of the 2-bar bass pattern – irrespective of the performance mode employed (chamber music ensemble with one player per part or orchestral forces), this bass part will be audible at all times.

Accompanying the *Canon* is less well-known *Gigue*, which is all too often ommitted in performance. In various ways it is related to its famous partner, the most obvious being the sharing of the same instrumentation (3 violins and continuo). Each half of the binary form movement commences with imitative ('canonic') writing between the upper parts – signifcantly, this is a common characteristic of the Gigue in its guise as an instrumental dance form. The pairing of the movements is a necessary part of the composer's concept, a 'mini-suite' in D major which focuses on one of the time-honoured techniques of music.

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The *Concerto in A minor for 2 violins and strings Op.3 No.8* is in many ways typical of the set, with very clear rhythmic outlines, a strong melodic motive emphasising the scale of a minor, and self-perpetuating melodic / harmonic sequences which drive the work forward at all times. The two solo instruments work together as a very tight partnership, with one player normally accompanying the other, rather than being in constant opposition to each other.

This approach is most evident in the slow movement, where the orchestral ensemble discreetly takes a minor role except at the beginning and ending when it states the main theme in unison. In the finale there is more independent solo writing, but here too there is much sharing of roles by close imitation and cohesion of melodic solos in one part supported by brilliant arpeggio figurations in the other.

Series 6, 2000 - Concert No.3

Handel – Concerto grosso in F Op.6 No.9, Overture and Ballet Music from *Alcina*
Telemann – Trumpet concerto in f minor, Suite in G No.10 TWV 55 *Don Quichotte*
JS Bach – 4 Contrapuncti from *The Art of Fugue* BWV 1080
Torelli – Trumpet concerto in D D.653

Handel's concerto output is largely a by-product of his vocal works, with many individual movements deriving from his early operas and oratorios. Unlike his contemporary JS Bach, Handel eschewed the extrovert Vivaldian style in favour of the more restrained style of Corelli, whom he had met during his sojourn in Rome (1707-9). A typically Corellian feature seen in Handel's Concerti Grossi Op.6 (composed 1739) is the frequent occurrence of more than three, and often as many as six movements in each work. Some of these are merely very brief linking sections, while others are fugal or dance-like. The works of Op.6 also retain the solo grouping of 2 violins and cello as practiced by Corelli,. though it is possible that Handel intended that oboes be included as doubling the first violins *ad libitum*. Throughout the work solo writing is kept to a discrete minimum, with the concertino group appearing for only brief passages. often as an echo to the full ensemble. The *Concerto grosso in F Op.6 No.9* is in six sections, including two movements which were borrowed from the composer's organ concerto in F and overture to *Imeneo*. The first two pairs of movements alternate between more lyrical moods and energetic fugal writing, while the final two sections are clearly in a dance format.

Telemann is one of the most prolific composers of his day, producing many works across all the major late baroque genres throughout his long and active career. His concerto works in themselves represent a major contribution, with almost 50 works composed for solo instrument and orchestra, including at least 8 for solo oboe. The *Concerto in f minor,* (performed this evening in an arrangement for modern trumpet and strings), is typical of these, with the normal three movement layout of Fast-Slow-Fast. The more sombre tone normally associated with f minor is relieved in the slow movement which is in the style of a siciliano, and the finale which has Vivaldi-like sprung rhythms. The plaintive quality of the oboe is most evident in the slow movement writing, while the outer movements demonstrate that the instrument is also capable of virtuosity approaching that of the string family.

Telemann's large instrumental *oeuvre* illustrates the variety of approaches open to the 18th century composer - his preference for the 'galant' style with its pronounced French accent was but one of many possibilities that he could have pursued. Whereas his position as Kantor in Hamburg required the provision of much sacred music along traditional German lines, Telemann's secular instrumental music is frequently composed in a much lighter vein. This is especially so in his numerous programmatic Overture-Suites, where he added descriptions of the elements of nature, humour, and vivid characterisations to the standard French pattern of a series of stylised dances. The *Suite in G No10 TWV 55 Don Quichotte* depicts several episodes from the well known story, including some scenes of great comedy via unusual instrumental effects. Telemann once again returned to Cervantes' novel for inspiration - he later produced another comic gem, the short opera-serenata *Don Quichotte at the Marriage of Comacho*, in 1661 at the age of 80!

At the end of his career, J.S.Bach was increasingly preoccupied with large-scale works whose basis is a single theme. In addition to the *Goldberg Variations* (30 variations on a single theme, including a series of canons), the organ variations on the carol *Vom Himmel hoch*, *The Musical Offering* (sonata and canons etc. composed on the basis of a short theme provided to the composer by Frederick the Great), the *Art of Fugue* provides evidence that Bach is able to build monumental works out of the simplest of means. Since its composition in the 1740s, there has ensued considerable debate as to the instrumental medium which was intended for its performance. The score is notated in full score, but it can be effectively performed on keyboard(s). Tonight's performance of *Four Contrapuncti* from this work in string orchestral format is in sympathy with such a conception, in that a homogenous tone colour allows the listener to concentrate on the interplay of the various lines, rather than be diverted by details in the orchestration.

Guiseppe Torelli is the foremost 17th century composer of instrumental concertos alongside his great contemporary Corelli. Both composers had connections with the important musical centre of Bologna - Corelli's career began there before he moved permanently to Rome, while Torelli was active as a string player in the famous orchestra of San Petronio. Between these two composers one sees the full range of developments within the concerto between c.1680 and 1710. In many ways Torelli had the more long lasting influence, in his establishment of the three movement Fast-Slow-Fast plan. This was adopted by Vivaldi and Albinoni in Venice, as well as Torelli's principle of using a recurring *ritornello* and alternating solo passages. The *Trumpet Concerto in D* undoubtedly falls within this category, despite the fact that Torelli's practice was to title such works as *sonata* or *sinfonia con Tromba*. Points of interest include the brief *Presto* outburst within the slow movement, and the rather dance-like finale.

While Handel was thoroughly schooled in the Italian operatic style of his day, he was not averse to also including some French elements in his operas. This is most clearly evident in the purely instrumental passages, namely the Ouverture and brief ballet sequences. The Italian style Sinfonia of three movements (normally Fast–Slow–Fast dance) is employed

as an effective curtain-raising formula for most of Handel's operas. Typically, the first of these movements, (as in the *Ouverture to Alcina*) is where the French influence is most obvious. It begins with a majestic section and is followed by a fast fugal section based on a striking theme. Similarly, the two movements which follow, and the two instrumental sections which appear just before the close of the opera (the *Ballet Music*), are heavily indebted to French dance forms. The *Musette* and *Tambourin* are more rustic in character, while the *Minuet* and *Entrée* are more courtly in character. None of this adds much to one's understanding of the plot of the opera itself however – the magical and mystical elements of the libretto of *Alcina* (composed 1728) are not reflected in the instrumental music at all, which has more of a ceremonial or incidental role.

Series 6, 2000 - Concert No.4

Rebel – Les Élémens, Suite from *Les Boréades*
Purcell - Chacony in G minor
Telemann - Concerto à7 for 2 violins and strings in E minor

This evening's program features three of the longest living baroque composers, as well as one whose career was cut tragically short at the age of 36. A further connection is that each of them lived in cities where theatrical music was thriving, and each contributed some fine works to the genres of opera and ballet. In addition, they were either based in France (Rebel and Rameau) or were strongly influenced by French taste (Telemann and Purcell). The first three of these composers lived to be octagenarians - an astonishing fact in itself, since life expectancy at that time was generally around 50 years. Despite this status as 'senior' composers, each of them were considered to be up to date with contemporary musical style, or at least were innovative right up until the end of their lives – thus their works simultaneously represent the end of the baroque and the mid-18th century changes of style. Purcell, in contrast, had a brief but spectacular career in the latter decades of the 17th century. He composed for many purposes including the London stage, where he achieved fame particularly during the last five years of his life. At that time, French musical style was in vogue in Restoration England. This program therefore has a decidely theatrical flavour, featuring music from both sides of the English Channel. Instrumental music from these theatrical origins, was used to convey the elements of drama and tension, without the need for an accompanying text (sung or spoken).

Jean-Féry Rebel (1661-1747) held an important place in music of the French Baroque. His fame, both then and now, is far outweighed by others - chiefly his teacher Lully and his brother-in -law Michel Richard de La Lande. Rebel held various court appointments during the reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV. During this time he had opportunity to compose a substantial amount of descriptive orchestral music. His major position was as firstly as a member and later conductor of the orchestra of the Académie Royale de Musique, which was the official institution of French theatrical music. The originality of his approach is at its most audacious in his choreographic 'symphonic nouvelle' *Les Élémens*. This work was composed in 1737, when Rebel was 76 years of age! The following year the complementary work *Chaos* was composed, which henceforth served as the Introduction (without dancing) to the ballet proper. Nowhere in Baroque music is there a more startling first chord - a veritable cacophony as a very complex discord (representing *Cahos)* is sustained almost to the limit of one's threshold of auditory discomfort. Meanwhile the elements are variously depicted - *L'Air* by long notes in the flutes followed by trills; *La Terre* (earth) by sustained notes in the bass; *L'Eau* (water) by descending and ascending scales in the flutes; and *Le Feu* (fire) by lively and brilliant interjections by the violins in a high register. These musical illustrations recur throughout the ballet proper, which comprises some of the customary dance types (Loure, Chaconne, Sicillienne) as well as character pieces (Ramage, Rossignols, Tambourin and Caprice).

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) exhibits some of the French influence which can be seen in English music in the late 17th century. His operas and incidental music feature French style dances and choruses alongside traditional techniques such as the ground bass. This was a technique for which Purcell was most highly regarded. The compositional device features a brief bass line pattern which is repeated continuously throughout a movement, while the treble lines undergo free variations. The related form of the chaconne was also already well developed by European composers in the early baroque, but by the 1690s the technique no longer flourished to the same extent as before. Purcell's *Chacony in G minor* is therefore a relatively late example of a genre which had tested many a composer's creativity over several generations. The characteristic descending bass line motive, as well as the key of g minor, has much in common with Purcell's most famous ground bass, namely the Lament from *Dido and Aeneas*. Another point of reference is that the large scale operatic works of Lully (which evidently influenced Purcell's theatrical writing) frequently conclude with a majestic chaconne for orchestra and voices.

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) was equally at home in theatrical and vocal genres as well as the purely instrumental forms of his day. Many of his orchestral works however have descriptive programs, exploit exotic instrumentations, or create unexpected effects through juxtaposition of distinct but quite different moods. His output of concertos is quite large (about 100) when compared the surviving works (less than 30) of his contemporary J.S.Bach. Proportionally, Telemann's works are therefore under-represented in the standard concert repertoire. However, many of his double concertos are scored for unusual combinations and therefore are deserve to be championed more vigorously (for example the double concertos for 2 horns, 2 chalumeaux, 2 oboes d'amore, recorder and flute, recorder and bassoon, oboe and violin). The *Concerto à7 for 2 violins and strings in E minor* uses the more conventional pairing of two violins, the standard treble section of the Italian trio sonata. This work is also distinctive in that it does not use the standard Vivaldi / Bach three movement plan of fast-slow-fast. Instead, the four movement layout of the church sonata

(slow-fast-slow-fast) is used. Gentle overlapping of imitative entries in the first movement is balanced by the *perpetuum mobile* style the second movement. Following the brief third movement with 'affective' phrase shapes, the finale is extremely lively resembling the character of a gigue.

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) was not destined to be a composer of stage music. He commenced his career as organist in various provincial cathedrals, and later became known as a keyboard composer and theorist. All the more astonishing is the fact that his brilliant career as a theatrical composer was launched at the age of 50, with the premiére of *Hipployte et Aricie*. By this time he had relocated to Paris, and was employed as the orchestral leader to one of France's most wealthy patrons of the arts, Le Riche de la Pouplinière. From 1733 until the time of his death, Rameau was accorded the same prestige which Lully had enjoyed under the rule of Louis XIV during the 17th century. However, Rameau's success was hard-earned, as initially he was discounted as one who was attempting to expunge the memory of Lully altogether by composing new serious operas. The form of French opera known as the tragédie lyrique was modernised by Rameau in terms of musical language, but he retains many Lullian ideals. Even the ill-fated *Abaris, ou Les Boréades* (composed in 1763, but not performed until after the composer's death) retains Lully's 5 act format, the preponderance of dance episodes (some accompanied by vocal solos or choruses), and the French style of recitative (more 'sung' than its Italian counterpart). While the suite of instrumental music from *Les Boréades* being performed tonight is necessarily devoid of plot, action, scenery and choreography, one can still enjoy the highlights of the drama. Frequently, the purely instrumental movements relate closely to the dramatic highlights, and tend to exhibit some astonishing special effects. After the vigorous Ouverture and a succession of lighter dances, a series of Entrées and Entr'actes depict scenes and characters such as the Wind and the Zephyrs, the Muses, the Seasons, and the torture of Alphise. This opportunity to focus on the instrumental aspects of this work also allows one to enjoy the richness and novelty of Rameau's orchestration. *Les Boréades* features a variety of woodwinds from piccolos and flutes, oboes and bassoons, to the newly arrived members of the orchesta, the clarinet family.

A further note – A scholarly edition of the Rameau work designed for modern performance requirements is yet to completed. The orchestral parts for the majority of the work's movements have been specially prepared for tonight's performance from a facsimile of the 18th century full score by Peter Roennfeldt.

Glossary of terms relating to Baroque Music

Affection - A particular mood or state as expressed in musical gestures and symbolism. In late Baroque music, each movement / aria / section of a work was governed by a single *Affekt*. In Italian opera and concerti, each aria or movement was expected to exhibit a contrasting *affection* from its neighbours.

Aria - A solo vocal movement in *opera* or *oratorio*. In the late Baroque, it was normally preceded by a section of *recitative* which contained dialogue or set the scene for what follows. the most common form used in the late Baroque was the *Da Capo aria*, in which the first section is repeated after a contrasting middle section.

Baroque - From the Spanish term *barocco* describing a misshapen pearl. First used in the mid-18th century in a derogatory reference to music of the previous generations which appeared to be overly complex and intricate when compared with the *Rococo*. Today the term is a single-word designation for European music of the 17th and early to mid 18th centuries.

BWV - Abbreviation for the German *Bach Werke Verzeichnis* (Catalogue of Bach's works). The complete listing in numerical order of the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, as catalogued by Schmieder for the Bach Gesellschaft. Works are grouped together by genre, eg. cantatas, other vocal works, keyboard, orchestral, chamber works. A similar numbering system is used for works by Handel (HWV) and Vivaldi (RV).

Cantata - A multi-sectional vocal work for solo voice(s) and continuo or chamber ensemble. It developed in Italy in the early Baroque as an equivalent of the Renaissance madrigal as a major secular vocal form. The *cantata* was adopted in 18th century Germany, where it acquired a sacred purpose, and was often expanded to include chorus and several soloists.

Collegium musicum - A musical organisation formed by amateur musicians, students and often led by a professional performer-composer, devoted to the performance of primarily secular music. Commonly found in German cities, for example in Leipzig,where the organisation was established by Telemann in 1702 and later led by JS Bach (1729-37 and 1739-41).

Concerto - An instrumental work for soloist(s) and (string) ensemble or orchestra. Developed primarily by Italian composers in the late 17th century, the *concerto* was either for a single soloist (usually violin, but also possibly flute, trumpet, oboe), or for a small group of soloists, as in the *concerto grosso* (normally two violins and cello). Concerti by Vivaldi and Bach are customarily in three movements (Fast-Slow-Fast), works by Corelli and Handel are often in five or more movements.

Continuo - Also known as *Basso continuo* or *Thoroughbass*. Almost all Baroque ensemble music requires the participation of a harmonic instrument (keyboard, lute, harp etc) which provides a 'filling in' function. These harmonies are improvised from a bass line 'figured' with a system of shorthand symbols. The bass is often reinforced by a sustaining instrument such as a cello.

Empfindsamkeit - German - 'the state of being full of feeling'. Commonly used in connection with the music of Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach whose solo keyboard works exhibit a great variety and intensity of emotion. A style that is distinctive of this composer and his contemporaries in mid-18th century northern Germany - the so-called *Berlin school.*

Fugue - A style of composition for several independent voice parts, either on a single (usually keyboard) instrument or in ensemble. The *subject* (heard unaccompanied at the outset) and its derivatives pervades the entire work, and can be manipulated both melodically and rhythmically. Fugal writing is found in all styles, particularly the traditional forms of church music.

Ground Bass - A unifying device common in Baroque music, where a short bass pattern is heard numerous times in succession within a movement or aria, while the melodic line normally develops with great freedom of invention. The pervading mood thus created can be one of grief, as in the lament from *Dido and Aeneas*, or optimism as in Pachelbel's *Canon in D.* Included in this category are the related genres of Chaconne and Passacaglia.

Masque - An English theatrical tradition dating from the late Renaissance which lasted through the mid-17th century. Combining various art forms (literature, music, dance and visual art), the *masque* became a lavish entertainment in the reigns of the first Stuart kings. By the time of Purcell, the essentials of this approach to stage entertainment remained, thus preventing the wholesale acceptance of Italian opera until the early 18th century.

Opera - A form of staged musical drama first developed in early 17th century Italy. Comprising a variety of vocal styles used variously to set passages of dialogue and monologue, action and soliloquy (*recitative* and *aria*), Italian serious *opera* increasingly emphasised the solo voice at the expense of ensemble singing and stage movement.

Oratorio - A musical setting of a sacred story, either Biblical, historical or allegorical in origin. Originally associated with the spiritual exercises conducted in the oratory of the Church of St Philip Neri in Rome, the oratorio gradually acquired the dramatic techniques of opera, including recitative, aria and ensemble singing.

Ornamentation - The art of embellishing various elements of a musical score in order to highlight its expressive details. Ornaments could be freely melodic or improvisatory, as was the Italian practice, or more measured and harmonically based, as was the French preference. In the latter system, a sophisticated of shorthand symbols was developed.

Ouverture - An instrumental form developed in France as the introductory movement to a stage work, later adopted by composers elsewhere as an independent genre for solo keyboard or orchestra. An opening stately section with strongly marked block harmonies and dotted rhythms, is normally followed by a faster passage in *fugal* style, followed by a series of stylised dances. The term is often used synonymously with *suite*, in which an *ouverture* would be the first movement.

Passion - A setting of the story of Christ's suffering and death, commonly cast in the form of an *oratorio* during the Baroque. 18thC Passions by composers including Bach juxtapose the narrative (cast as recitative for soloists and brief choruses in the crowd scenes) with the responses of the individual believer (in the arias) and the universal church (in the chorales).

Quodiblet - A compositional genre or pastime popular in the Renaissance and Baroque, whereby several melodies are superimposed. The result was sometimes a humorous cacophony, at others a display of great contrapuntal skill.

Recitative - Those portions of an *opera* or *oratorio* where the focus lay in the text rather than in the melody. Normally set as a freely interpreted series of declamatory phrases with a simple accompaniment from the *basso continuo*, the *recitative* formed a foil to the more fully developed *aria,* which emphasised aspects of vocal beauty and melodic shape.

Ritornello - The recurring orchestral passage which separates the solo sections of an aria or concerto. The ritornello frequently introduces the chief melodic motives and pervading mood and rhythm of the movement, though in some cases the solo line will take an entirely new direction.

Rococco - A term borrowed from the visual arts describing a style current in the mid-18th century. In musical terms, the desire for a natural, but simple flowing style eschewed complexities of counterpoint and harmonic intensity. Composers such as Pergolesi and Johann Christian Bach have been described as proponents Rococo or 'pre-classical' style.

Sinfonia - The instrumental prelude to an Italian opera of the late Baroque, normally in three sections (fast-slow-fast). In the mid 18th century, a sinfonia was frequently performed in concert as an independent work, thus forming the basis of the early classical symphony.

Sonata - An instrumental work, commonly for one or violins and *basso continuo*. Developed in Italy as a multi-movement composition, the sonata was usually designated *da chiesa* (for the church) or *da camera* (for the chamber). If composed for two equally important melodic instruments, the term *trio sonata* normally applies.

Style galant - A term borrowed from the visual arts describing a style current in the mid-18th century. In musical terms, the desire for a natural, but simple flowing style eschewed complexities of counterpoint and harmonic intensity. Composers such as Telemann and Johann Christian Bach can be described as proponents of the galant *Rococo* or 'pre-classical' style.

Suite - A set of stylised dances, usually in the same key. Though based around the common French dance types, the customary order of *Allemande-Courante-Sarabande-Gigue* was largely a German phenomenon. Typically, one or more optional dances such as *Gavotte, Minuet, Bourée, Passepied, Loure* might be included before the *Gigue*.