

Programme Notes

Given the focus on the trumpet in tonight's programme, perhaps a short explanation of the instruments that will be used might be in order. Several of the concertos performed here may be at least somewhat familiar to many audience members, perhaps very often performed on the small "piccolo" trumpet often used these days for high Baroque trumpet parts. The piccolo trumpet is pitched in B flat or A, and its tube length of approximately 65 cm is comparable to that of an oboe.

In contrast, the baroque trumpet you will hear this evening, was a valveless instrument approximately 2¼ metres in length, usually pitched in D. It could produce only the notes of the so-called harmonic series. Since, in proceeding upwards, the size of the intervals between these notes progressively decreases, it is only in the fourth octave – the high register – that a complete scale is obtainable (the same principle applies to the horns in use this evening). To render melodic passages a player must thus ascend to dizzying heights – 'high C' or even higher, depending on the instrument's pitch, the composer's inclination, and the performer's capabilities! During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, trumpet makers sought to escape the restriction of the harmonic series in their search for chromaticism. With the invention of the valve around 1815, they ushered in the modern era of the fully chromatic trumpet. Trumpets were then built in increasingly higher pitches, reaching up to the modern piccolo version.

We begin this evening's concert with a short but virtuosic concerto by one of the great masters of the Baroque period. It is among the first solo trumpet concertos penned by a German composer. **Georg Philipp Telemann** himself probably needs little introduction, as he is well known as one of the most prolific composers of his generation. However, as a proportion of his prodigious output, solo concertos number relatively few, and even during his lifetime, praise for Telemann's works focused on his overtures and quartets rather than his solo concerto writing. However, with his concerto for trumpet, Telemann was breaking free of some long standing traditions (those of using brass instruments purely in the heroic vein) and discovering a new and wonderful *cantabile* mode of speech in which to feature the trumpet. The opening movement is unusual not only by the fact that it is a slow *Adagio* opening to a concerto, but by the fact that the trumpet is included in the beautiful lyricism. Telemann expressed his musical ethos in a statement "*Gieb jedem Instrument das, was es leyden kann, so hat der Spieler Lust, du hast Vergnügen dran.*" (Give each instrument what it can sustain, so is the player well pleased and you well entertained.) In the light of this concerto, "what the instrument can sustain" is revealed as meaning not merely what tradition had ordained it could do, but everything that he knew it could do!

The two sonatas by **Heinrich Biber**, are a good example of where the evolution of Baroque musical style began. Biber was a Bohemian violinist and composer of phenomenal talent, who worked principally at the Salzburg court. In addition to his incredible skill on the violin, Biber was highly regarded in his lifetime as the composer of a wide range of works from Opera and sacred vocal music to chamber music, solo works and collections of instrumental music. The *Sonatae tam aris quam aulis servientes* (Sonatas appropriate to the altar or the court) (1676) is the earliest of these collections, comprising a set of 12 pieces written on a grand scale for varying combinations of trumpets, violins, violas and continuo in five to eight parts. The two performed this evening are Number 6, scored for 2 violins, 2 violas and continuo, and Number 4 which

features one trumpet, one violin, two violas with continuo. Biber's writing for the rich sound of multiple violas is a characteristic seventeenth century Austrian trait. It is interesting to note the difference in the writing for the trumpet between Biber and Telemann. In the Sonata no.4 Biber uses many of the traditional "fanfare-like" motives and uses the trumpet in a much more heraldic manner than Telemann who wrote his concerto nearly 50 years later, at the beginning of the 18th century.

Biber's contemporary **Henry Purcell** is undoubtedly the most highly regarded native-born British Baroque composer. He was organist at the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey, and as well as writing sacred works wrote copious amounts of theatre and instrumental music. The *Fairy Queen* was first performed at the Queen's Theatre in London in 1692; the production was quite an extravaganza, featuring actors, singers, dancers, instrumentalists, and live animals. The plot—Shakespeare's *Midsummer's Night's Dream*—was acted in its entirety, whilst the music was performed as a masque at the end of each act, more of a commentary on the play than an integral part of it.

The orchestra of the Dresden Court was one of the leading musical ensembles of the 18th century and Telemann, Heinichen and Fasch all wrote works with the virtuoso members of the ensemble in mind. These "*concerti con molti instrumenti*" (concerti for multiple instruments) played a pioneering role in the development of orchestral music. **Johann Friedrich Fasch** exerted a considerable influence in Dresden with numerous compositions over the years (overtures, concertos, sonatas, masses and other sacred works). In the Concerto in D performed this evening, the development of the "multi instrument" concerto is evident. Firstly, the scoring for 2 trumpets, 2 horns, 2 oboes, bassoon and strings indicates a large orchestral sonority, but the work itself does not follow the traditions of distinctly contrasting the solo and tutti sections. Many of the tutti (or full orchestral) sections also contain episodes of transparent instrumental interpolations, and the individual solo wind instruments, instead of giving isolated displays of virtuosity, are organically united within themselves and also with the orchestral group as a whole.

The Fasch concerto for solo trumpet that opens the second half of the concert, on the other hand, is an example of a much more traditional concerto style, in three movement form. Fasch made the addition of a pair of oboes to the accompanying string ensemble which add a pleasing colour support for the trumpet. This concerto, well known as one of the more demanding pieces of the Baroque trumpet repertoire, begins with a flourish for soloist and continuo before the strings join in. After a lyrical middle Largo, the final minuet with a returning "rondeau" form delivers increasingly ornate episodes for the soloist.

^[1]_[SEP] Like Telemann and Fasch, **Johann David Heinichen** studied law at Leipzig University, but chose music for his career. To master Italian opera style, Heinichen spent seven formative years in Italy, mostly in Venice, where he met Antonio Vivaldi. Upon returning to Germany, Heinichen's reputation as composer spread quickly, and in 1717 he was appointed as a *Kappelmeister* of the infamous court orchestra of Augustus II in Dresden. The influence of the Vivaldian concerto is audible in the Concerto for flute and oboe heard tonight, and the virtuosic solo parts are a testament to the high level of the instrumentalists in the Dresden court.

Handel's *Water Music* was written for a lavish party thrown by the newly elected King George the First on the River Thames in July 1717 to boost his popularity. *The Daily Courant* reported

on the event thus: ‘Many other Barges with Persons of Quality attended, and so great a Number of Boats, that the whole River in a manner was cover’d’. The party of barges travelled up the river from Whitehall to Chelsea, and the orchestra of fifty musicians, conducted by Handel himself, performed on a barge right behind the King’s boat. The King was so pleased with Handel’s musical offering of over an hour of music, that he requested it to be performed a total of three times over the evening: twice before and once after supper, by which time it was already several hours past midnight, undoubtedly making it an exhausting gig for the musicians! The orchestration was novel to the ears of the King and his guests: before *Water Music* British knew the horn only as an instrument used in hunting.

Though the earliest sources present *Water Music* as one composition, it is often divided into three orchestral suites, distinct in key and instrumentation: the F major Suite with horns; that in D major with horns and trumpets; and the one in G major with flutes and recorders. The Suites in D and G performed tonight are presented in the same intertwined order as they appear in the earliest surviving scores, making a varied dance suite with contrasting characters and textures.

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