Linden baroque orchestra

Director: Steven Devine

Soprano: Kate Semmens
Baritone: Giles Davies

Recorder: Maggie Bruce
Flute: Nicholas Jackman

Handel began his ambitious and dramatic cantata *Apollo e Dafne* for Soprano, Baritone and orchestra in Venice in 1709. He completed it the following year in Hanover after arriving to take up his appointment as Kapellmeister to the Elector, later to become King George I. The hugely successful opera *Agrippina* was written for the Venice Carnevale the same year. Both works show the importance of Handel's Italian experience in helping to shape his later brilliant operatic career in London.

Nov 24th 6.30pm St Stephens, Hampstead

Handel From *Agrippina*:

Overture
L'alma mia frà le tempest (sop)
Pur ritorno a rimirarvi (bar)
Col raggio placid (bar.)
Non ho cor che per amarti (sop.)

Telemann
Concerto in E minor for recorder, flute & strings
Largo – Allegro – Largo – Presto

*** **Interval** (drinks available from back of church) ***

Handel *Apollo e Dafne*

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) was born to a barber-surgeon in Halle whose aim for his son was to study law, like many other eventual composers, including Telemann. The Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels had a high opinion of the lad and persuaded his father to let him study music with a church organist, Zachow, whose own music embraced the latest fashions, including the Italian. Handel seems to have received a good grounding in composition in all the current styles, learning by copying out the works of other composers, a practice which stood him in good stead for his later many 'borrowings'.

He obtained his first professional post as church organist in 1702 and the following year left Halle for Hamburg where he played in the back desk of the violins at the opera and filled in on the harpsichord. According to his friend Mattheson, "he composed very long, long arias and really interminable cantatas, which had neither the right kind of skill nor taste, though complete in harmony, but the lofty schooling of opera soon trimmed him into other fashions".
The Italian aria style was starting to be actively incorporated into the opera productions at Hamburg, which previously relied far more on a recitative basis. Handel quickly rose through the ranks to direct operas and became a central part of the organisation. Hamburg was a major port with strong links to Italy in particular. One traveller, Gian Gastone de' Medici, the Prince of Tuscany, befriended Handel and persuaded him he needed to acquire a first hand Italian musical education. He stayed there from 1706-10 and travelled widely, spending time at least in Florence, Rome, Naples and finally Venice.
Agrippina was Handel's second Italian opera. Compared with its predecessor, Rodrigo of 1707, *Agrippina* of two years later had developed a much tauter dramatic flow with greater character delineation. He reused some previous music and borrowed from other composers, as was the fashion but it was a huge success, having a then-unprecedented run of 27 consecutive performances. Opera was a disposable form and Handel quickly moved on to other things – including around 40 operas - and it became largely forgotten until more recent times. It tells a typically convoluted story of Agrippina, the scheming mother of Nero (by a previous marriage) , as she plans the downfall of her husband, the Roman Emperor Claudius and his replacement with her son as Emperor. Many other characters are involved in sub-plots and it all becomes horribly messy yet it retains a dramatic coherence and integrity marking it out as Handel's first masterpiece.
On return from Italy Handel was appointed Kapellmeister in Hanover. One of his advocates for this post may well have been Agostino Steffani, the leading court musician there 20 years earlier, whom Handel had met in Rome. The Elector of Hanover, of course, became George 1st but by then Handel had already established himself in London, where Italian opera was taking the city by storm.
Apollo e Dafne, a dramatic cantata, virtually a mini-opera, dramatizes the story by Ovid of the heroic warrior Apollo's pursuit of Daphne, who transforms herself into a laurel tree in order to escape the god's hormone fuelled and unwanted advances. The piece varies greatly in mood, from sublime murmurings to satirical elements appearing in both the music and the libretto.

Georg Phillip Telemann's (1681–1767) family disapproved of his precocious musical interests – he wrote his first opera at the age of 12 - and like his lifelong friend Handel, his parents insisted upon him studying law. Whilst at Leipzig, away from his mother's watchful eye, he gained a commission from the mayor to compose a cantata every other Sunday at the Thomaskirche - later to be J S Bach's church - and he formed an orchestra to perform regular concerts of his and other contemporary music – including a lot of Handel's - and within a year of his arrival became director of the Leipzig Opera. He was considered the foremost German composer of his time, so much so that he was later actually offered the job of Kantor of the Thomaskirche in preference to J S Bach though he was stuck in Hamburg at this time. He travelled extensively and thoroughly absorbed the musical languages of many countries and was thought daring and avant-garde in his synthesis of national styles – especially the French and Italian. He was a great entrepreneur and wrote and published himself vast quantities of colourful and interesting music for most combinations of instruments. Handel was especially impressed with his friend's music and there are at least 150 documented "borrowings" of Telemann's music within Handel's output.

Steven Devine enjoys a busy career as a music director and keyboard player working with some of the finest musicians.
He made his London conducting debut in 2002 at the Royal Albert Hall and is now a regular performer there - including making his Proms directing debut in August 2007 with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He has conducted the Mozart Festival Orchestra in every major concert hall in the UK and also across Switzerland. Steven is Music Director for New Chamber Opera in Oxford and with them has conducted performances of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas,

Mozart's La Finta Semplice and Il Re Pastore, Stradella's Il Trespolo Tutore, Rossini's Le Comte Ory, Handel's Xerxes and Tamerlano, Arne's Artaxerxes, Galuppi's Il Mondo alla Roversa. He has directed the first performance of the newly-acquired score of Cavalli's Erismena and Sallieri's Falstaff with the same forces. For the Dartington Festival Opera he has conducted Handel's Orlando and Purcell's Dido and Aeneas.
Since 2007 Steven has been the harpsichordist with London Baroque in addition to his position as Co-Principal keyboard player with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He is also the principal keyboard player for The Gonzaga Band, Apollo and Pan, The Classical Opera Company and performs regularly with many other groups around Europe. He has recorded over thirty discs with other artists and ensembles and made three solo recordings. His latest recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations (Chandos Records) has been receiving critical acclaim - including Gramophone magazine describing it as "among the best". Another volume of Bach's harpsichord works is in preparation.
Steven is a regular member of the OAE education team, Professor of Harpsichord and Fortepiano at TrinityLaban Conservatoire of Music and a visiting teacher, adjudicator and examiner for many other institutions. He is also Director of Development for the Finchcocks Collection of historical keyboard instruments, Kent.

Kate Semmens is a soloist with many leading groups and opera companies, and has sung with some of the UK's finest choirs with conductors including Sir John Elliot Gardiner, Paul McCreesh, John Butt and Eric Whitacre. Her opera performances have included Cupid (Venus and Adonis), Mycene (*Isis*), Suzanna (*Le Nozze de Cherubino*), and Mrs P (The Man who mistook his wife for a hat). Kate is a regular performer for New Chamber Opera, with whom performances include Galatea (Acis and Galatea), Second Woman (Dido and Aeneas), Orgando (*Amadigi*), Atalanta (*Xerxes*), Semira (*Artaxerxes*). She was the title role in Mozart's '*Il Re Pastore'* and most recently played Asteria in Handel's '*Tamerlano'.* She created the role of Euridice in Caldwells' The Story of Orpheus. Of her Ciro, in their production of Stradella's *Il Trespolo Tutore*, Opera Magazine wrote " the clarity and charm of Kate Semmens' soprano was dissarming". Kate has been particularly involved in historic performances, singing the title role in the first modern performance of John Stanley's *Teraminta* for Opera Restor'd and recently completed performances of Cavalli's Erismena, from the original English edition bought by the Bodleian Library in 2009. Kate particularly enjoys singing with instrumentalists, and has been enjoying recent performances of Bach Cantatas with violinist Margaret Faultless, Jacobean programmes with lutenist Lynda Sayce, and viol programmes with Jacob Heringman and Susanna Pell.
Kate has been particularly enjoying performing recitals of music from the pleasure gardens, and the recent anniversaries of Thomas Arne and William Boyce have given opportunities to explore the wealth of this music even further. Her latest solo CD Delicatessen performed with harpsichordist Steven Devine and recorded at the Sendesaal in Bremen gave opportunity to record some of this repertoire. ***Copies will be on sale tonight.***

Giles Davies studied at the Purcell School of Music, and on a scholarship at the RCM with Norman Bailey. He was a prize-winner in the 1993 Overseas League, the 1994 Tillett Trust, and the 1999 AESS.
He has recorded for the BBC ('Dichterliebe' at the Wigmore Hall), and appeared with the late Richard Hickox ('A Sea Symphony'/'Dido and Aeneas') Philip Pickett (Monteverdi's Vespers) Trevor Pinnock (Handel's 'Apollo and Dafne'); Mahler's 'Kindertotenlieder' (Ballet Rambert) and London Mozart Players. As a young actor Giles appeared as Hans in Massenet's 'Werther' and Puck in Britten's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at the ROH, and featured in season one of the LWT drama series 'Drummonds'. Since then his many operatic roles have included the title role in 'The Piano Tuner' (Osborne/Holden), for MTW, receiving acclaim in the national press, ('commanding', 'outstanding', 'sympathetic', 'rich and smooth toned'), and an onscreen appearance as John Goss in the film 'Peter Warlock, Some Little Joy'. (Signum DVD). His 2007 song album, 'Gossiana', dubbed 'a mighty labour of love' by International Record Review, is on Divine Art Records. He also appears on the new recording of Edward German's Tom Jones (Naxos), and has collaborated on the albums 'Illumination' and 'Temptation' with the Mediaeval Baebes.

Operatic roles have included Figaro in Rossini's 'Barber of Seville' (Scottish Opera), (English Pocket Opera), Dr Kolenaty in Janacek's 'Makropoulos Case' (Scottish Opera), Schaunard in 'La Boheme', (Castleward/ Holland Park Opera/ Scottish Opera), Masetto and Leporello in Mozart's 'Don Giovanni' (DGOS and ECO), Dandini in Rossini's 'La Cenerentola' (Epoc) Viscomte Cascada in Lehar's 'The Merry Widow' (SO), Lackey in Strauss's 'Ariadne auf Naxos' (SO) Falke in 'Die Fledermaus' (Crystal Clear and Carl Rosa), Figaro in Mozart's 'Marriage of Figaro' (Holland Park Opera), Besso in Cavalli's 'Giasone', (Megaron, Athens), Dmitri in the European Premiere of Richard Wargo's 'The Music Shop', (Jigsaw Music Theatre), Ferryman/ Ananias/ Father in the 'Church Parables' of Britten, (Opera du Rhin, Strasbourg), 'Love's Labyrinth' with Opera Restor'd, Elviro and Ariodates in Handel's 'Xerxes' (NCO and OTC), Giacinto in Galuppi's 'Il Mondo nella Roversa' (NCO) Pish Tush in 'The Mikado', Strephon in 'Iolanthe' and Sir Richard in 'Yeomen of the Guard' (Carl Rosa Opera).
2013 performances include Handel's Oratorio 'Susanna'. He has recently collaborated with Katharine Blake (Mediaeval Baebes) on recordings of Gregorian Chant. He has also completed a new Audiobook in it's entirety, 'Cockroaches and Diamonds', which uses rare archival sound recordings. (www.cockroachesanddiamonds.co.uk). This summer he appeared with New Chamber Opera at New College, Oxford, in Handel's Operatic masterpiece, 'Tamerlano'.
Since 2012, he has been Artistic Director and Producer at Samson Studios, specializing in historical sound recordings and audio musicology.

Linden Baroque was formed in late 1984 by a group of early music enthusiasts in the front room of a house in Linden Gardens, Chiswick. Unusually - and uniquely anywhere at that time – it combines the talents of young professionals, amateurs and students and many members have moved on to have prominent careers in the early music field. From the beginning, the musical director was the well-known baroque oboist Paul Goodwin. Now pursuing a busy international conducting career, Paul is Honorary President and Steven Devine, following Walter Reiter, as Musical Director. The orchestra has played at venues from Norfolk to Rome (where it gave the first performances there of Purcell's King Arthur). The instruments are either 18th century originals or modern copies - some made by the players themselves and we play at "baroque pitch" of 415Hz.
Linden gave first modern performances of music by Jean Gilles and J F Fasch. Our first CD, on the Meridian label of music by Fasch, was was played on Radio 3 and Classic FM.

Copies are available for sale tonight at £10 - not long 'til Christmas!

Linden Baroque is a registered Charity (No 1014921) and, apart from receiving a National Lottery grant in 1999, is entirely self-supporting. We are always looking for sponsorship for individual events or series.

O R C H E S T R A

Flute: Nicholas Jackman **Recorder:** Maggie Bruce
Oboes: Simon Galton, Lysander Tennant **Bassoon:** Maggie Bruce
Violin 1: Ben Sansom, Claire Bisdorff, Ilana Cravitz, Clive Letchford, Ian Cutts, Anja Kuch
Violin 2: Michael Jenner, Alexandra Ait Mansour, Judy Taylor, Carolyn Hall, Alan Selwyn, Linda McDonald
Viola: John Sutherland, Maya Enokida, Nicola Jackman
Cello: Louise Jameson, Mary Walton, Helen Brauer **Bass:** Chloe Wantin
Harpsichord: Steven Devine, Claire Williams **Theorbo:** Toby Carr

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The next Linden Baroque concert in this venue is on February 9th 2014 and is a collection of wonderful Bach Cantatas directed by Steven Devine with a cast of exciting young singers.

www.lindenbaroque.org

Linden Baroque would like to thank St James' Baroque & Peter Holman for the loan of music and the staff and Trustees of St Stephens for their kind assistance.