Music in the time of Kings Louis XIV and XV

New London Singers

Linden baroque orchestra

November 3rd 2019 6.30pm
St Stephen's, Hampstead

Director Oliver John Ruthven

Leader Ben Sansom

Welcome to our concert, which dips its toes into the glorious French baroque choral and orchestral repertoire. We start in the time of King Louis XV and after the interval go back to the time of Louis XIV.

Louis XIV was well-known for his love of dancing and the famous portrait of him by Hyacinthe Rigaud in 1701 shows a splendid pair of unnaturally young and elegant legs for a 63 year old, ending in some funky orange-heeled dancing shoes. Dance was elevated to high importance in France by the enthusiasm and talents of the Louis who danced regularly in public. In fact all 3 Kings Louis loved to dance and dancing remained at the centre of the social and political life at court. And of course dance forms permeated the other musical genres, even the most spiritual.

Lully was the musical powerhouse of Louis' court and held a near monopoly over musical entertainment and style. He discouraged visiting musicians from abroad, particularly Italians, so as to retain a strictly French aesthetic. After the death of Lully, we see the influence of Italian and German musical tradition being allowed back into French music – *Les goûts-réunis*, the bringing together of tastes. From the grand, formal approach of Lully to the sensual and freely flowing Rameau we see a shift in sensibilities as culture moved from the baroque into the rococo and towards the early classical.

Louis XV unfortunately succeeded Louis XIV at the tender age of 5, becoming King, proper, at the more reasonable stage of maturity of 13y. His reign oversaw the Enlightenment - perhaps French culture's finest period - but also was almost continual warfare and economic failure and not too long after Louis died came the French Revolution. He was, however, well-loved as a man and in turn loved many women, including the famous Madam de Pompadour. She was a great patron of the arts and made sure music was performed regularly at Versaille to please the king, much of it by Rameau. She also helped give a leg-up to Jean-Joseph Mondonville.

Jean-Philippe Rameau Suite from *Hippolyte et Aricie*

Ouverture – Prelude (Descente de Jupiter) - Pme Aire Tendrement – Deuxieme Aire Un peu gai – Aire gai – Ritournelle – Menuet 1 & 2 – Tambourin 1& 2

Rameau was born in Dijon in 1683, two years before JS Bach and Handel and he outlived both, dying at the age of 81, in Paris.

This suite is from Rameau's first opera, Hippolyte et Aricie, of 1733. He waited until his 50th year before embarking on this genre, though he went on to write 30 more. Apart from an influential treaties on harmony, he had written mainly for the harpsichord and church and and this was his first work for the stage. At its premiere, it immediately declared itself as innovative, veering away from the many rigid operatic conventions cemented by Lully, the giant of the previous generation. The changes were too much for many and a huge and at times acrimonious controversy ensued between the traditional *Lullistes* and the progressive *Rameauneurs*.

Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville *De Profundis clamavi* (Psalm 130)

1. De profundis clamavi ad te Domine	Out of the depths I have cried to thee, O Lord:
Domine exaudi vocem meam	Lord, hear my voice.
2. fiant aures tuae intendentes in vocem deprecationis meae	Let thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.
Si iniquitates observabis Domine	If thou, O Lord, wilt mark
Domine quis sustinebit	iniquities: Lord, who shall stand it.
3. Quia apud te propitiatio est propter legem tuam sustinui te	For with thee there is merciful forgiveness: and by reason of thy law, I have waited for thee, O
Domine sustinuit anima mea in verbum eius	Lord. My soul hath relied on his word:
Speravit anima mea in Domino	my soul hath hoped in the Lord.
4. A custodia matutina usque ad noctem speret Israel in Domino	From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord.
5. Quia apud Dominum misericordia et copiosa apud eum redemptio	Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with him plentiful redemption.
Et ipse redimet Israel ex omnibus iniquitatibus eius	And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.
6. Requiem	

Mondonville (1711 – 1772) was a violinist in Le Concert Spirituel and composer, who rose to become the Master of the Music of the (Royal) Chapel and eventually director of Le Concert Spirituel. He composed popular operas, oratorios and grands motets and was said to be second only to Rameau in excellence.

- Interval (drinks served) –

Jean l'Héritier *Nigra Sum*

l'Heritier creeps surreptitiously into this programme – he was a French Renaissance composer active in the early 1500s. He is most famous for a series of Motets including 3 settings of Nigra Sum. After studying with Josquin des Prez he travelled to Italy, possibly on a one-way ticket, as there is no record of his return. He was employed in Ferrara, by Pope Leo X in Rome, later in Mantua, Verona and possibly Venice. He died around 1552. He wrote in a style somewhere between Josquin and the later Palestrina.

Nigra sum sed Formosa filiae Jerusalem *Ideo dilexit me rex introduxit me in cubiculum suum*	I am black but comely , daughters of Jerusalem, Therefore have I pleased the Lord and he hath brought me into his chamber

François Couperin *In Notte Placida*

François (1668 – 1733) was the most famous of the Couperin musical dynasty and became one of the organists of the royal chapel and court harpsichordist to Louis XIV. In much of his music he sought to amalgamate the best of the Italian style (his acknowledged model was Corelli) - lively, rhythmic with bright harmonies - with the French - more spacious, rhetorical, rhythmically flexible and richly harmonic style. He is revered for his four books of highly expressive harpsichord music as well as chamber music for weekly royal Sunday concerts and some lovely works for the church. He also wrote influential books on harpsichord technique and these and his music were much appreciated by Bach and later by Brahms. This delightful *pastorale*, probably originally an Italian folk song, is an early Christmas treat.

In note placida, per muto sentier, Dai campi fedei il Redentor. Nell'aura e il palpito d'un grande mister, del nuovo Israello nato è il Signor, il fiore più bello dei nostri fior.	In the quiet of the night, on a silent path, from the fields of the heavens descended the one whom faithful souls love, the Redeemer. The breeze is filled with the sense of a great mystery, the Lord of the new Israel is born, the most beautiful of all flowers.
Cantate popoli, gloria all'Altissimo! L'animo aprite a speranza, ad amor. Se l'aura è	Sing, people, glory to the Highest, open your souls to hope, to love! If the wind blows cold and the sky

gelida, se fosco è il ciel; oh vieni al mio cuore, vieni a posar, ti vo' col mio amore riscaldar. Se il fieno è rigido, se il vento è crudel; un core che t'ama voglio a Te dar, un ben che Te brama, Gesù, cullar.

is dark, come, let me press you to my heart, let me warm you with my love. If the hay feels harsh, if the wind bites cruelly, let me give you a heart that loves you,
I long to cradle you, Jesus, against my breast.
(Transl. Mick Swithinbank)

Jean-Philippe Rameau Solo Keyboard work

To be announced

Jean-Féry Rebel *Les Caractères de la Dance*

Prelude – Courante – Menuet - Bourée – Chaconne – Sarabande – Gigue – Rigaudon – Passepied – Gavotte – Sonate – Loure - Musette – Sonate

Rebel (1666 – 1747) was director of the '24 violons du Roi', official composer to the King and chief beater - not a hunting or sado-masochistic activity: conducting at that time involved thumping a big stick on the floor to beat time. This caused, incidentally, the downfall of the Lully who gave himself a fatal foot wound when he misdirected his baton whilst directing a Te Deum, in celebration, ironically, of the king's own recovery from illness. It was Lully who had recommended Rebel to the king, having talent-spotted him at the age of eight.
Les caractères de la danse, is a *fantasie* in one through-composed movement, swiftly cataloguing the main dance forms prevalent in France in the first half of the 18th century, before being rudely displaced with a more modern and brash Italianate 'Sonate'. It was a popular piece at the time - sometimes danced - and was performed in London in 1725 directed by a certain George Frederic Handel.

Marc-Antoine Charpentier *Te Deum* D maj H 146

1.Prelude

2 Te deum laudamus	We praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
3. Te Aeternum Patrem	All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting.
4. Pleni sunt caeli et terra	Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty: of thy glory
5. Te per orbem terrarium	The holy Church throughout all

	the world: acknowledges thee
6. Tu devicto mortis aculeo	When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death: thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
7. Te ergo quaesumus	We therefore pray thee, help thy servants: whom thou hast redeemed with thy blood.
8. Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis	Make them to be numbered with thy Saints: in glory everlasting.
9. Dignare, Domine	Vouchsafe, O Lord: to keep us this day without sin.
10. Fiat misericordia tua	O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us: as our trust is in thee.
11. In te, Domine, speravi	O Lord, in thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded.

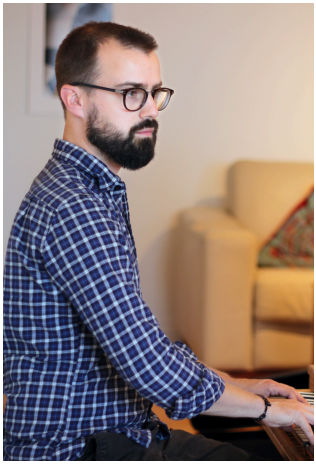
Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1634 – 1704) studied under Carissimi in Rome and therefore found himself, on return to Paris, in particular disfavour under the strict Lullian regime. Lully's monopoly prevented Charpentier from producing public operas but he wrote a lot of incidental music for plays (particularly for Moliere) and small-scale pieces for private performance as well as a great deal of church music.

The *Te Deum* was written around 1692, probably to celebrate a military victory, as befits the bright D major key and it makes use of dramatic contrasts of ceremonial glory with quieter, solo devotional moments – rather in the way of the Italian chiaroscuro paintings he must have seen in Rome.

The opening of this *Te Deum* is, of course, famous as the signature tune of the European Broadcasting Union and we play this in homage to our European friends at this difficult time.

Oliver John Ruthven

Since 2010, Oliver John has worked with the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists under the direction of John Eliot Gardiner. This has principally been as a continuo keyboard player, but he has also sung as a tenor in the choir, acted as assistant conductor on several tours, and, most recently, produced a recording of renaissance and early Baroque polyphony, which was released in April 2019.
He is in much demand as a continuo player, working as harpsichordist and organist for the English Baroque Soloists under Gardiner, and as a



founder member of Musica Poetica. He has also played with Stile Antico, The Academy of Ancient Music, The Hanover Band, His Majesty's Sackbuts & Cornets, and the English Cornet & Sackbut Ensemble. He recently performed the complete vocal works of Franz Tunder with Musica Poetica, and directed the group's debut recording, due for release in 2019.

As a choral conductor and accompanist, Oliver John has worked with the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, the Hallé Youth Choir, the Brighton Early Music Festival, and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's education department.

New London Singers

Founded in 1963, NLS are one of London's most exciting vocal ensembles. They perform most frequently at St Martin-in-the-Fields on Trafalgar Square but recent concerts have taken them to a variety of venues in the capital, including St James's Piccadilly, and Kings Place. As well as concert performances, the choir is often to be found singing evensong at such venues as St George's Chapel, Windsor (2018-2019), St Paul's Cathedral (2016), and Southwark Cathedral.

TV and audio recording credits include the *Alan Titchmarsh Show*, *The One Show* and *Classic Goldie*, a follow up to the popular BBC *Maestro* competition, which featured musical director Ivor Setterfield. The choir have also featured on Joseph Calleja's album (2012) celebrating the great American tenor Mario Lanza, and on Bill Turnbull's Relaxing Classics (2016).

NLS have been a touring choir for much of their long history with recent destinations including Lisbon, Jersey, Paris and Seville.

Recent highlights include a complete performance of Vaughan Williams' Serenade to Music and Chilcott's A Little Jazz Mass (2014/15), sacred music by Martin, Poulenc, Durufle and Villette (2015/16), Schoenberg's Friede auf Erden (2017/2018) and Handel's Israel in Egypt (2017/2018).

In the 2018/2019 season highlights included: Brahms German Requiem by candlelight at St James' Piccadilly and Allegri Miserere at the Queen's Chapel of the Savoy.

Soloists denoted by *

Sopranos

Katie Breakspear
Heather Catchpole
Helen Gray*
Emma Leigh
Susie May*
Alice Ojha
Kate Roscoe*
Jess Weaver*
Milly Walt
Alex Ward*

Altos

Emilia Carslaw*
Angie Elder*
Ellen Hayward-Seers
Rosalie Taylor*
Helen Wills*
Kate van Rijswijk*

Tenors

Justin Althaus*
David Brookes
Sam Lyons*
Joe Middleton
Owain Roberts

Basses

Sebastian Lomas
Jason Orringe
Laurence Peters*
Henry Ross*
Ian Williams

Linden Baroque Orchestra

Violin 1

Ben Sansom (lead)
Michael Jenner
Anthony Constantine
Christine-Marie Lowe
Wendy Talbot
Ian Cutts

Violins 2

Nicola Hayston
Hannah Patrick
Gillian Taylor
Alan Selwyn
Barbara Grant
Sally Heath

Violas

Iulian Turicianu
Andrew Spencer
Simon Hill
Deborah Miles-Johnson

Bass
John Mears

Oboes
Simon Galton
Lysander Tennant

Flutes
Nicholas Jackman
Richard Austen

Bassoon
Mathew Dart

Trumpet
Katie Lodge

Timpani
Andrew Cumine

Harpsichord, Organ
Oliver John Ruthven

Grateful thanks to Bill Tuck for the loan of the timpani

For information about Linden Baroque and
to keep in touch or join our mailing list, visit:
www.lindenbaroque.org