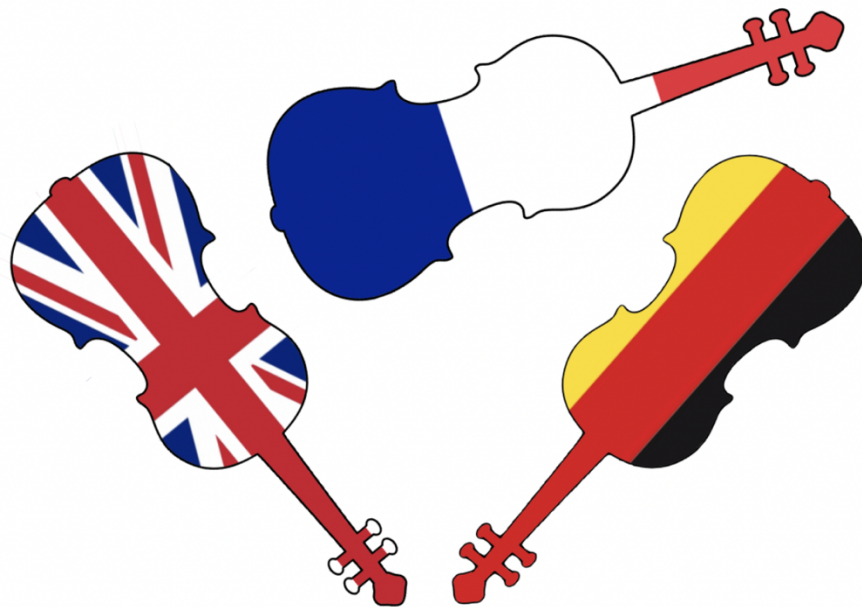


Linden baroque orchestra

Director Ashley Solomon

The French Connection



February 11th 2024 6:30pm

Welcome to tonight's concert!

There will be no interval. You are welcome to take your drinks to your seat.

We're delighted our new Musical Director, Ashley Solomon, is directing us again. The 'short' format without interval has proved popular. Let us know what you think.

French musical styles were part of the wider European sensibility, particularly amongst the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, who, of course, were the prime paymasters. And so, we find French dance forms and the French 'Ouverture' used throughout the music of Europe.

Francoeur: Simphonie (no 2) du Festin Royal du Comte d'Artois

Ouverture - Air gracieux - Air vif - 1st Gavotte - 2nd Gavotte - Air de marque – Air vif - Contredanse

Handel Concerto Grosso Op6 no 5

Larghetto e staccato - Allegro - Presto - Largo - Allegro - Menuet

Telemann Concerto Francese for 2 oboes & bassoon TWV 53:C1

Avec douceur - Tres vite - Tendrement - Vivement

Rameau: Suite from Dardanus

Ouverture - Menuet tendre en rondeau - Tambourin I & II - Air des guerriers - Ritournelle vive - Chaconne

French style baroque music has been a major part of mainstream European tradition, widely absorbed and utilised by most important composers across the continent. It is characterised by an affected elegance and underpinned by certain stylistic elements which became accepted as 'high art' under the enthusiastic patronage of Louis XIII, Marie-Antoinette and especially Louis XIV, for whom the arts represented his power and authority. French music, with its more high-brow cerebral aspects, was elevated as superior to the more direct Italian excitement and passion, reflecting an evident French superiority in the arts, sciences and pretty much everything, at least from their perspective!

As high art, it was circumscribed by strict rules. Dance was held to be its apotheosis with lavish opera-ballets, great politically aware spectacles at which the King himself often danced. Good taste was always sought, with grace and elegance fundamental qualities. The fluid French language, with its nasal vowels, liaison, and elision, is reflected in its music, which has quite different gestures from the much more focussed and direct delivery of Italian. Decorations in the music became very stylised to deliver good taste. Rhythmic stresses followed the linguistic pattern and groups of regular notes were often swung - *inéglale* (unequal). The sound world is often quite different due to the disposition of voices among the strings. Generally, in the early 1700s there were five types of strings – Dessus (high voices – violins), Haute-contres, Tailles and Quintes (all violins, violas, or viols of different sizes), Basse (cellos or viols da gambas). The 'inner' parts were not independent, relying on the dessus to provide the melody, the bass to accompany and the inner parts to enrich the harmony and rhythm. By around 1760, with Gluck's developments, the modern string section of 1st and 2nd violins, violas, cellos and bass had established itself.

The main man in the development of the French orchestra was Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632 - 1687). Though Italian by birth (born Lulli), he spent most of his life in the court of Louis XIV and was given license to control every aspect of musical life at the court and therefore of the country and he used his powers ruthlessly. He raised the standard of orchestras, allowing him to write music of great sophistication. As dance was so important – and he was an expert dancer himself - he was able to develop it to new heights. Hitherto, court dances were generally slow and stately but under Louis' encouragement, Lully introduced much livelier and more varied dances into his ballets: gavottes, menuets, rigaudons, sarabands and one of his favourites; the chaconne. The orchestra was changed from an often-motley mob into a highly disciplined machine with uniform and sophisticated bowing, precise rhythmic control and a wide range of expression. Lully ensured French music remained 'pure' but after he died, German and Italian influences were allowed to creep back into French music , *Les gout- reunis* - the bringing together of tastes.

The **Francoeur Sinfonie** starts with a typical French *ouverture*, a form often used by composers such as JS Bach, Handel, Telemann et al. A formal first section with a heavily 'dotted' rhythm is followed by a faster, usually fugal style section and finally returning to the opening material.

The particular French elements in the **Handel concerto grosso** are its first movement French overture and the last movement minuet. The other movements lean more closely towards Corelli.

The **Telemann concerto** has a French feel, without being stylistically exact. The third movement is a sort of saraband.

It is also interesting to reflect on the times these composers occupied. Born within 17 years of each other (and including Bach of course) by the time Francoeur died, Mozart had written his Prague Symphony and The Marriage of Figaro, the young Beethoven had tried to meet Mozart for lessons, Haydn had written his Paris Symphonies, Schubert was busy being born and the French revolution was just a couple of years away. In current terms that's the equivalent of seeing a change in classical music from Elgar to Thomas Ades, Steve Reich or Max Richter including Stockhausen and Messiaen and all others in between (or from 1930s swing to hip-hop). Times, tastes and styles were certainly changing fast.

François Francoeur (1698 - 1787) was a Parisian violinist and composer who played at the age of 15yrs in the Académie Royale de Musique. After travels in Europe, he returned to play an important part in musical life as a member of the Concert Spirituel and the 24 Violons du Roi. He shared directorship on the Paris Opéra with François Rebel until it burnt down. Louis XV honoured him as his Music Master. His music, including 10 operas and some ballets, is very attractive, if conservative, certainly compared with the emerging early classical world. It was,

however, probably very reassuring for many of the bourgeoisie at the time, especially given the controversy of Rameau's new style we encounter later.

The selection we play tonight comes from one of four suites forming a sprawling composition and collection of other composers' works assembled for the marriage festivities between Comte d'Artois, the 16-year-old grandson of Louis XV and brother of Louis XVI who became, much later, King Charles X, and Marie-Therese of Savoy. It was played at Versailles by a band of 78 musicians.

George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759) is the only baroque composer to have had his music performed continually up to the present day. He was born in Halle, Germany but became a British citizen in 1710 (when European workers were rather more welcome than currently). London was then the musical capital of Europe: political and economic instability abroad, its lively trading status and the lack of rigid religious and court structures had encouraged many of the continent's finest musicians to settle here. Handel had already spent several years learning his trade in Italy. He had played in Corelli's band many times in Rome and thoroughly assimilated the Concerto Grosso genre from the master. In Rome at this time, it was common for an orchestra to be led by a small *concertino* group, rather than a single leader and in the Concerti Grossi – Grand Concertos - they have the chance to pit their wits against the *ripieno* band. The typical Corellian concerto is of four movements with strictly tonal harmony, 'walking' bass lines and a harmonic clash at cadences.

The 'Twelve Grand Concertos, Op. 6' are considered among the very finest concerti grossi but also some of Handel's most inventive pieces. They mostly follow Corelli's model and bring a rich variety of styles and material with French overtures, fugues, Italian sinfonias, airs and many dances from across Europe. They were published by subscription in 1739, '*taken by the Author, at his Home in Brooke's-street, Hanover square; and John Walsh in Catherine-street in the Strand*'... for two guineas, '*...engraved in a neat Character, printed on Good Paper.*' Walsh had already published an edition of Corelli's celebrated set of 12 concerti, also opus 6, clearly hoping to mirror that huge success with Handel's works. Like the previous Opus 3 set, these were used as 'fillers' between the acts of Handel's oratorios and odes. Unlike the earlier set these were mostly newly composed, rather than recycled and Handel had clearly wished to set out his stall as a composer of the highest quality.

The musical historian, Charles Burney, writing in 1785 of tonight's concerto stated, '*The opening of this piece always impressed me with the idea of its being the most spirited and characteristic of all the music written by Handel, or any other composer, on Lulli's model of Opera Overture, which seems to require a convulsive, deliberate and military craft ... The finale, or minuet of this Concerto, has been so much admired by English composers of Handel's school, as to have to have been frequently thought worthy of imitation.*'

Georg Philip Telemann's (1681 – 1767) family disapproved of his precocious musical interests and like his teenage friend Handel, his parents insisted upon him studying law and packed him off to Leipzig. Fortunately for posterity, he followed his musical instincts and gained employment in the city as a performer on several instruments and as a composer of music for the church and opera house. He also formed an orchestra - surviving to this day as the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra - to perform regular concerts of his and other contemporary music, including much by Handel. He soon moved on to employment in Hamburg where he was to spend the rest of his life. He spent eight months in Paris and was highly impressed by Rameau's *Castor et Pollux* and this French experience heavily influenced his vocal style in particular. He absorbed the musical languages of many countries and was thought daring and avant-garde in his synthesis of several national styles into the German tradition.

He was highly regarded by musicians everywhere and very influential. A great entrepreneur, he wrote and published himself vast quantities of colourful and interesting music for most combinations of instruments and voices; over 3,000 works, around half of them surviving.

Handel was especially impressed with Telemann's music and there are at least 150 documented "borrowings" of Telemann's music within Handel's output, considered an honour rather than a crime at the time. Telemann, in return, produced several Handel operas in Hamburg. They were good friends and kept up regular correspondence and shared not only music but plants, which they sent each other.

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683 – 1764) 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.

He was an important musical theoretician but when he reached the age of 50, he began pouring out operas, writing over 30 of these, upon which his reputation largely rests today (along with his harpsichord works). At the time he was marmite - revered for his daring imaginative writing or vilified for destroying Lully's carefully curated musical order. The changes he made were too much for many and a huge and at times acrimonious controversy ensued between the traditional *Lullistes* and the progressive *Rameauneurs* (a play on the French *ramoneur* – chimney sweep). His works were daring, employing innovative orchestrations and using new instruments such as the clarinet, as well as writing with a new freedom as music evolved into the rococo and early classical worlds.

Dardanus was a tragic opera on an ancient Greek tale which premiered to mixed reactions in 1739 but having been re-written in 1744, became one of Rameau's greatest hits when revived in 1760. Though having a convoluted dramatic plot, the music is very fine with many supernatural effects, a sea monster, sleep scene, storm, many dances and so on. It has broken away irrevocably from Lully's formulae. We play a brief selection from the three-hour production that gave no one in the orchestra "*time even to sneeze*", as one critic put it.

Ashley Solomon



Active as a soloist and chamber musician, Ashley is the director of Florilegium, and much of his time is spent working and performing with this ensemble that he co-founded in 1991. Since 2001 he has been its director. They have a busy touring schedule and each year performing at major international festivals and concert series throughout Europe as well as the Americas. Florilegium have been recording with Channel Classics since 1993 and have to date made 37 recordings, many of which have garnered international awards. They have given over 1,500 performances over the years and recently their 85th performance at London's Wigmore Hall.

As a soloist, he has performed worldwide, including concertos in the Sydney Opera House, Esplanade (Singapore), Teatro Colon (Buenos Aires), Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Konzerthaus (Vienna), Beethoven-Haus (Bonn), Handel-Haus (Halle) and Frick Collection (New York). He also records as a solo artist with Channel Classics and his recording of the complete Bach's Flute Sonatas was voted the best overall version of these works on either modern or period flute by Gramophone Magazine (February 2017): *Solomon's luminous tone and unfussy command of the complicated melodies conflate into something utterly beautiful. Slow movements are soulful in their infinite variety, fast ones are clever and with a wealth of invention behind them.*

Since 2003 Ashley has been training vocalists and instrumentalists in Bolivia, working on the remarkable collection of music held in archives by the Moxos and Chiquitos Indians. He formed Arakaendar Bolivia Choir in 2005 and has directed them in concerts throughout North and South America, Europe and in the Far East and on their 3 cd recordings. In 2008 Ashley was the first European to receive the prestigious Bolivian Hans Roth Prize, given in recognition of the enormous assistance he has given to the Bolivian native Indians, their presence on the international stage and the promotion and preservation of this music.

Combining a successful career across both theory and practice, Ashley Solomon is Head of Historical Performance at the Royal College of Music, having been appointed a professor in 1994. In 2014 he was awarded a Personal Chair and in July 2017 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music (FRAM) which was conferred on him by HRH Duchess of Gloucester. In 2019 he was also elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Music (FRCM) which was conferred on him by HRH Prince of Wales. Both Fellowships are in recognition of outstanding services to music. Since 2014 Ashley has been working closely with the Royal Collection Trust to curate musical performances in their Royal venues including Buckingham Palace (Queen's Gallery, Ballroom) at Windsor Castle and in the Queen's Chapel.

Linden baroque orchestra

Director: Ashley Solomon

Violin 1: Ben Samson*, Gillian Taylor, Barbara Grant, Diane Wyatt, Alan Selwyn,
Linda McDonald,

Violin 2: Michael Jenner, Jocelyn Slocombe*, Anthony Constantine, Carolyn Liefkes,
Ian Cutts

Viola (Haute Contre): Liz Hart, Deborah Miles-Johnson

Viola (Taille): Roger Mears *, John Sutherland

Cello: Louise Jameson*, Christine Draycott, Paul Woodmansterne

Double Bass: John Mears

Harpsichord: Cesi Keiffer

Flutes: Richard Austen, Aimee Taylor

Oboe: Lysander Tennant**, Simon Galton**

Bassoon: Mathew Dart**

*Concertino in the Handel Concerto Grosso

** Soloists in the Telemann Concerto

Linden Baroque was formed in 1984-ish (historians argue about this) 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, advanced students and amateurs 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 was followed by Music Directors Walter Reiter (ex-English Concert) and Steven Devine (Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) and now Ashley Solomon. Linden Baroque has played at venues from Norfolk to Rome (where it gave the first performances there of Purcell's King Arthur) and Berlin. Together with the Linden Baroque Choir we gave first modern performances of music by Jean Gilles and J. F. Fasch. Our first CD, issued in 2001 on the Meridian label of music by Fasch, was well received and was played on Radio 3 and Classic FM.

Linden Baroque is a registered Charity (No 1014921) and, apart from receiving a National Lottery grant in 1999, is entirely self-supporting.

Join our Mailing list:

Forthcoming Linden Baroque Concerts:

April 14th Bach St Matthew Passion with New Sussex Singers and
Ardingly Choral Society at Ardingly College, Haywards Heath, Sussex

**July 14th at St Stephen's directed by Ashley Solomon – Music by a
miscellany of Bachs**

www.lindenbaroque.org



Dance steps from in original notation from c1775. It was taught on a summer school in 2001 run by the Historical Dance Society, which one of our players attended. The dances were devised by Gardel, dancing master to the queen of France - probably Marie Antoinette, depending on the precise date - and notated by Malpied. There is a Youtube (not taken at said summer school) of two dances, a Menuet followed by tonight's Gavotte:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2RoapN7d1c>

