

Linden baroque orchestra

Music of the French Baroque

Director
Peter Fender

Sunday October 29 2017
St Stephen's, Hampstead



1. Marc-Antoine Charpentier: *Prelude to Te Deum*

2. Jean-Baptiste Lully: *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme – Overture et Suite*

1. Overture 2. Canarie 3. Marche pour la Cérémonie des Turcs
4. Seconde Air 5. Quartieme Air 6. Chaconne des Scaramouches trivelins
et arlequin

3. Marc-Antoine Charpentier: *David et Jonathas – Overture et Suite*

1. Overture 2. Marche Triomphante 3. Menuet 4. Prelude Act II
5. Gigue 6. Prelude Act IV 7. Rigaudon 8. Bouré 9. Bruit d'Armes

4. Michel Blavet: *Sonata for 2 flutes from Op 1*

5. Marc-Antoine Charpentier: *Marche de Triomphe et 2me Air des Trompettes*

- Interval 20 min –

6. Philidor / Dumanoir: *Suite de Ballet*

1. Intrada 2. Sarabande 3. Gavotte 4. Fantasie 5. Tambourin

7. Jean-Philippe Rameau: *Les Indes Galantes - 5 Suites d'Orchestre*

Suite 1 1. Overture 2. Air Polonois 3. Musette en rondeau 4. Menuets

Suite 2 1. Air pour les Guerriers portans les drapeaux 2. Air pour Bourée
a la Rose 3. Marche

Suite 3 1. Tambourins

Suite 4 1. Adoration du Soleil

Suite 5 Entrée les Sauvages 1. Danse du grand calumet de Paix
executée par les Sauvages 2. Chaconne

Welcome to our concert of fabulous French music!

The French baroque music revival came later than that of the Italian and German tradition. The musical language was seen as more esoteric and if performed without appreciation of the style, could seem somewhat impenetrable. Over the last 30 or 40 years, proponents such as William Christie and his students, have researched and re-invigorated the form giving it a context and showing music capable of rising to the highest levels of drama or pathos, delightful and witty dances and elegant and expressive instrumental pieces.

The French baroque style is full of rhetoric, gesture and elaborate and formalized ornamentation. The music is delivered in patterns closely following speech and of course the French language has an elegance, rhythm and stress quite different from German or Italian. 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.

After the death of Lully, we also see the influence of Italian and German musical tradition being allowed back into French music – *Les goûts-réunis*, the bringing together of tastes.

In France in the mid to late 17th century, dramatic works for the stage were often punctuated and interwoven with musical *intermèdes*. Under Lully, in collaboration with Molière, these became effectively operas with ballet sequences which then developed into a complete art-form in their own right.

Dance was elevated to high importance in France by the enthusiasm and talents of the King Louis XIV 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. Publically staged dance was an excuse for exotic costumes, elaborate scenery and great, mechanised transformation spectacles and it became a necessary part of the operas of the day.

Lully was intimate at court and negotiated himself a virtual monopoly on musical stage entertainment, stifling all competition in Paris. With huge royal resources at his disposal he raised the spectacle of his stage productions to truly impressive and elaborate levels. The vast operas, ballets and all forms between were part of the machinery of the government, often put on for political purposes to dazzle the other European powers, particularly involved in the ongoing struggles between the Bourbons and the Hapsburgs. The arts - and sciences- were held in high regard as demonstrations of French supremacy, supported in the late 17th century with the creation of the seven French Academies. So it became a natural requirement for a French national style of music to be self-evidently superior to those of other nations.

Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643 – 1704) studied in Italy, possibly with Carissimi. Much of his service was in the church, writing 11 masses many other liturgical settings. He also wrote for the stage and when Molière fell into financial ruin at the hand of the over-ambitious Lully, Charpentier took over the partnership and in turn collaborated on many productions at the newly formed Comédie Français.

David et Jonathas of 1688, a five act opera concerning the biblical story of David and Jonathan, was commissioned by the Jesuits for specific liturgical use and in this way Charpentier evaded the jealous guard of Lully's supporters and got his opera produced. It wasn't until after Lully's death that Charpentier could return once more to the stage proper and in 1693 produced his great operatic masterpiece, a *tragédie-lyrique*, *Medée*.

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632 - 1687) was born in Florence, Giovanni Battista Lulli, and was taken as a teenager to Paris in service to the family of Chevalier de Guise. He attended balls and other royal entertainments and having mastered several instruments, quickly learnt the music of the day, particularly the popular dance forms, many of which you'll hear tonight. Dancing with the young King, Lully became a favourite at court and he took the position of court composer for the ballets.

His intermèdes (musical, danced and sung interludes) inserted into the operas of Cavalli and others had a profound effect on the audience and he continued in this vein to the stage, collaborating with Molière in many of his comedies, the last being *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Molière was ruined by Lully's ambitious collaborations and broke away to found the *Comédie Française*, leaving Lully to take over the *Palais Royal*.

Lully manoeuvred himself, with the King's favour, to take over the fledgling *Académie Royale de Musique* in 1672, complete with musicians, dancers, singers and a full company for creating grand stage spectacles. He moved away from dance as the primary means of expression to singing and created 12 *tragédies lyriques* which were sycophantic allegories on themes of various types of royal wisdom and general greatness usually based on classical mythologies. With an emphasis on the text, his vocal works conformed to the declamatory rules of the theatre stage. To avoid monotony he interspersed the lengthy dramas with *divertissements* - choruses, ballets and magical stage effects.



Lully remained very close to Louis and employing royal powers, retained a virtual monopoly on Parisian (and therefore French) musical entertainment. A shrewd businessman – he was the only person ever to run the Paris Opera at a profit - he became a very wealthy man. He ensured no other could produce big stage works and fellow composers such as Charpentier suffered, often turning to sacred or chamber music as their only possible outlet. He dismissed the existing Italian musicians as part of his deliberate plan of 'stylistic cleansing' and discouraged travelling musicians from abroad and so Lully's music remained pre-eminent. (This was quite the opposite situation of London which thrived on foreign musicians and their different styles).

Lully also arranged his music within the orchestra differently from Italian and German models with 5 part writing with a division of parts in the 'middle textures' – violas especially, and large wind sections, giving a different sound stage, as we hear tonight. Syntactic differences and rhythmic freedom with 'inegale' – unequal divisions of notes within the bar and often jazzy cross rhythms are quite different from the more metric styles from Italy or Germany. French music of this time therefore has a great individual personality. It was only later from around 1730, in the time of mature Rameau, that 'les goûts-réunis' gathered pace.

Lully was not universally liked and was often the subject of gossip and jealousy, with attempts to unseat him with accusations of homosexual debauchery. He ruled his musicians with a discipline which created an extraordinarily high standard of orchestral playing and singing. He conducted the *24 Violons du Roi* and the *Petits Violons*, the best musicians at court, with whom he developed new heights of orchestral playing, perfecting style and precision and creating influential techniques. In England the Francophile Charles I sent some musicians to France to import the style across the Channel.

Lully's death is almost better known today than his music: during a performance of his *Te Deum*, composed to celebrate the King's recovery from illness, he banged his conducting stick - a long pole with which he beat time - into his foot and died 3 months later from gangrene, an interesting foot-note in history but not such a great feat at the time, perhaps?

Michel Blavet (1700 – 1768) starting as a wood-turner, became a professional flautist and bassoonist, though he taught himself every instrument (interestingly, he played the flute pointing the other way around from modern practice). He became the finest French flautist of his generation and was admired by Voltaire. He played in Louis XV's personal musical ensemble and at the Paris Opera. He also seemed a particularly nice person as might be heard in his amiable music and the great Quantz said of him, "His pleasant disposition and engaging manner gives rise to a lasting friendship between us and I am much indebted to him for his numerous acts of kindness" (one of which may have been to turn down the post of flautist in Frederick the Great's orchestra, a post which Quantz famously took). Surviving among his works are a concerto and two sets of flute sonatas and an opera.

André Danican Philidor l'ainé (the elder) (1647 – 1730) was a musician and composer but more importantly, was Keeper of the King's Music Library, collector and chief copyist of manuscripts, particularly the court music and many of the dances used in Louis XIV's ballets. This forms the Philidor Collection, a large collection of great importance to musicologists studying French baroque dance and music. Though half has been lost, many books of manuscripts are found in libraries across the world (including, until the 1980s, in St Michael's College, Tenbury, Worcs.) with the largest body in Versailles and Paris. André Danican also produced 21 children, best known of whom was François-André Danican Philidor, confusingly known under the same name as his father during his life, who was a prominent composer and the best chess player of his age.

Guillaume Dumanoir (1615 – 1697) was the leader of Louis XIV's famous "Vingt-quatre violons du roi", whose main function was to participate in the lavish ballet productions. He was a favourite of the King, holding high office, until the ambitious Lully came along and took control of most of the royal musical operations.

The Philidor/ Dumanoir suite we are playing contains a selection of pieces from the Philidor Collection including some pieces known to be by Dumanoir. French dances such as the Gavotte and Courante became popular around Europe and some of the dances in this suite are found in the library at Upsalla, Sweden as part of the *Ballet de Stockholm*.

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683 – 1764) was a late developer, not producing his 30 or so revolutionary operas until he was 50 yrs. He settled in Paris in 1722 having held minor posts as a violinist and organist in Lyons, Dijon and Clermont where he formulated a scientific theory of harmony, later developed into a body of work that forms the basis for the study of tonal harmony today.

Rameau's first opera was *Hippolyte et Aricie*, (which Linden Baroque performed last year with Peter Fender). It was premiered in 1733 and immediately declared itself as innovative, veering away from the many operatic conventions cemented by Lully. Rameau's drama was set in a more fluid, spontaneous style, with music taking over from rhetoric as the main impulse, melody replacing dry recitative, more daring harmonisations and richer, more varied scoring. The changes were too much for many, including the orchestra which demanded some cuts to the more difficult music.



Thereafter arguments raged between the old guard Lullians and supporters of Rameau. Rameau's music is much more imaginatively scored, more varied and daring in its harmonies, using newly emerging instruments such as the clarinet and writing virtuosically for the horn. Pastoral episodes were coloured by effects such as imitations of the hurdy-gurdy or musette, a type of bagpipe. Certain dances employed percussion to add an oriental quality.

The subjects of these *opéra-ballets* were excuses for displaying the exotic and amusing in music and dance; the story and any notion of dramatic progression were largely superfluous.

Les Indes Galantes (The Galant Indies) was an opera-ballet of 1735. The vague plot, in which Cupid, in a political move, abandons Europe for the Indies, gives rise to many excuses for musical exoticism, including episodes for shipwrecked sailors, Poles, Turks, Peruvian Incas, savages (inspired by some native American Indians who were brought to Paris to meet Louis XV and were invited to dance minuets in public) and dancing flowers. Despite this melange it was not an initial success but after revision it eventually gained considerable popularity with scenes from it being presented regularly at the Palais-Royale for over 40 years.

In a huge and at times acrimonious controversy, the audience and critics were deeply divided between the traditional *Lullistes* and the progressive *Rameauneurs* (a play on the French *ramoneur* meaning 'chimney-sweep'). Hard to imagine now, but it was probably the equivalent in its day of 3D cinema with THX sound and a bit of a shock for the Parisian bourgeoisie used to the more predictable and polite world of Lully's works. French opera had become, under Lully's Royal patronage, a major cultural and political symbol of the nation's sophistication and high ideals and Rameau had disdainfully swept aside the many requirements and rules that were demanded of the form and introduced a new freedom which threatened the status quo and shook the complacency and confidence of many.

Rameau obtained private patronage and lodgings for his family, from La Poupliniere, a wealthy patron of the arts who gathered around him the best writers, artists and musicians and for whom Rameau wrote some very fine chamber music. A prestigious court appointment also came Rameau's way in the 1745 as composer for the King's chamber. Following the success of *Hippolyte et Aricie*, Rameau's composing career concentrated almost exclusively on opera. He produced around 30 in all the major formal styles – tragedies, opera-ballets, comedies and so on. They established him as the major French opera composer of his time.

Though in person known to be rather difficult, he was so revered that 1500 people attended his memorial service and 180 musicians played.

Peter Fender – Conductor & Composer

Having studied in London, Peter is currently musical director of the Angel Orchestra, Mid Sussex Sinfonia, Chamber Academy Orchestra, the Six Centuries Chamber Choir and Philharmonia Britannica (which he founded in 2007, particularly keen to mix music with other art forms - such as acting, poetry, dance, comedy and video). Aside from his native England he has conducted in Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, and Romania.



Recent highlights for Peter have included the première of Federico Borrometi's funeral music in Sicily, works with solo for viola by Telemann and Holst and Mahler's extraordinary 2nd symphony. Forthcoming projects include Alice Mary Smith's rarely heard 2nd symphony, Mozart's double piano concerto and Messiah with Linden Baroque on 16 December

in St James's Piccadilly. Peter also leads conducting workshops in London, including days to introduce conducting to non-musicians. Details of all these (and many more) are on Peter's website.

As a composer Peter has recently written a string quartet, piano pieces entitled 'In her prime' and songs for soprano and harpsichord. He has also been commissioned to write a new overture for Harmony Sinfonia. Peter has released a recording of his own orchestral compositions (on sale this evening). Entitled 'Speechless' it includes works with solo parts for cello, sax, and mezzo-soprano. Please also pick up a copy of Peter's composition catalogue before you leave! A short film has been made about Peter – available on his website: www.peterfender.co.uk

Linden Baroque Orchestra

Formed in 1984-ish 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 following Walter Reiter, Steven Devine, the brilliant harpsichordist and director is current Musical Director. The orchestra has played at venues from Norfolk to Rome (where it gave the first performances there of Purcell's King Arthur) and in 2015 in Berlin where it performed with Simon Standage. 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 has been heard on Radio 3 and Classic FM. Linden Baroque is a registered Charity (No 1014921) and is entirely self-supporting.

VIOLIN I: Ben Sansom (leader), Christine-Marie Louw, Barbara Grant, Alan Selwyn, Clive Letchford

VIOLIN II: Michael Jenner, Claire Sharpe, Anthony Constantine, Ian Cutts, Wendy Talbot

VIOLA I: Andrew Spencer, TBA VIOLA II: John Sutherland, Simon Hill

CELLO: Christine Draycott, Helen Brauer, Mary

BASS: John Mears

Walton OBOES: Lysander Tennant, Simon Galton, Peter Tsoulos, Heather Skinner

FLUTES: Nick Jackman, Richard Austen

BASSOON: Mathew Dart

TRUMPET: Samuel Pierce

TIMPANI & PERCUSSION: Matthew Farthing

HARPSICHORD: Christine Thornton

Linden Baroque's next concerts:

Dec 9th 7.30pm

All Hallows, Twickenham TW1 1EW

Handel's Messiah

Directed by Stephen Gregson

www.allhallowstwick.org.uk

Dec 16th 7.30pm

St James's, Piccadilly W1J 9LL

Handel's Messiah

Directed by Peter Fender

<http://the6ccc.co.uk>

Feb 17th 2018 7.30pm

Eastbourne

Bach's St Matthew Passion

Phoenix Choir

Directed by Michael Fields

www.phoenixchoir-eastbourne.co.uk

May 13th 2018 6.30pm

St Stephen's Hampstead

Music for the London Stage

Directed by Theresa Caudle

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www.lindenbaroque.org