

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES SPRING · SUMMER 2014

Concerts at The University

Tuesday 11 February 2014

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

Reid Memorial Concert

Ruth Slater · violin

Ellen O'Dell · violin

Christopher Suckling · cello

John Kitchen · harpsichord

**Programme of works by CORELLI, GENERAL REID,
FONTANA and HANDEL.**



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Sonata da camera in C, Op. 4 No.1

Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)

Preludio: Largo

Corrente: Allegro

Adagio

Allemanda: Presto

After he settled in Rome, probably in the early 1670s, the young Corelli rapidly made a name for himself both as a violinist and composer. He left various sets of trio sonatas *da chiesa* (for the church) and *da camera* (for the chamber). Today's sonata is one of the latter, beginning with a stately, dotted *largo* movement which is followed by a lively corrente (the Italian version of the French courante). The pulsating *adagio* is slow, chromatic, full of pathos and features almost constant suspensions in the harmony. (Compare some of Purcell's intense string writing of around the same period.) This mood is quickly dissipated by the brisk and joyous *allemanda*.

Solo No. 3 in D for violin and basso continuo

General John Reid (1721–1807)

Allegro moderato

Andante Largo

Minuet affettuoso [with two variations]

As is well known to Edinburgh audiences, General John Reid (whose portrait hangs at the back of the Reid Concert Hall and is looking down at you now), left an endowment to the University of Edinburgh which in 1839 provided for a Chair in Music; in due course the Faculty of Music was established. He specified that a concert in his memory should be held annually in February to include his music. Reid was renowned in Edinburgh and London as a flautist, and left 12 flute sonatas or 'solos'. In 1756 he published *Six solos for a German Flute or Violin with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord*, from which today's piece comes; in 1762 *A Second set of Six Solos* appeared. The pieces are attractive and charming, with a confident melodic and harmonic style; some movements have a distinctly Scottish flavour.

Sonata settima for two violins and continuo

Giovanni Battista Fontana (c. 1589–c.1630)

Little is known of Fontana, although we do know that he came from Brescia, and that later he worked variously in Venice, Rome and Padua, dying of the plague around 1630. Today's sonata comes from a Venetian publication of 1641, engagingly and informatively entitled *Sonate a 1, 2, 3 per il Violino o Cornetto, Fagotto, Chitarone, Violoncino o simile altro Istromento*. The fact that these pieces were published posthumously, in a memorial publication, is testament to the regard in which they must have been held. Like many Italian instrumental works of the early Baroque period, today's sonata is in one continuous movement divisible into a number of contrasting sections; much of the writing is improvisatory in style and requires a degree of freedom in performance.

Trio Sonata in G Op. 5, No. 4

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Allegro

A tempo ordinario

Passacaille

Gigue: Presto

Minuet: Allegro moderato

The history of Handel's chamber music is complex, partly because the attributions in the earliest publications are not entirely reliable, and also because Handel borrowed and adapted many of the movements from other works. His Opus 5 was published in 1739 and does appear to have been authorized by the composer, although oddly it contains seven trios; such publications were traditionally in sixes. The Handel scholar Anthony Hicks suggests that no. 4, the work we hear today, might have been compiled and added to the set by the publisher Walsh, rather than by Handel himself. The movements are adaptations respectively from *Athalia*, *Il Parnasso in Festa*, *Radamisto*, *Terpsichore* and *Alcina*. Whatever the origins of the piece, there is no doubt that it contains some of Handel's finest music; particularly splendid is the central *Passacaille*.

Ruth Slater is professor of baroque violin and director of the Baroque Ensemble at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where she is also a lecturer in the Creative and Contextual Studies department. In this role she lectures in Historically Informed Performance Practice, Teaching Musician for bowed strings and Music in Society. Ruth is active as a diploma examiner for the ABRSM, a role which takes her to the Far East as well as the UK. As a performer she freelances widely, regularly directing period instrument performances and playing and recording with groups such as the Gabrieli Consort and Players and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Ruth has worked extensively with many other orchestras including Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the The Early Opera Company. As a soloist she has appeared with many leading period instrument orchestras and ensembles, both in the UK and abroad, including Florilegium, The Hanover Band, London Handel Orchestra and Ludus Baroque.

After finishing her studies with Mark Knight at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, **Ellen O'Dell** pursued her interest in the baroque violin. In 1985 she took part in the first European Baroque Orchestra training course in Oxford, studying with Micaela Comberti. Ellen has subsequently played with most of the UK's period instrument orchestras, which include English Baroque Soloists, London Handel Orchestra, The Hanover Band, Gabrieli Players, English Concert, The Sixteen, The Academy of Ancient Music and many others. As a chamber musician Ellen has performed with The Parley of Instruments, London Baroque, and her own Kent-based 'Ariodante Ensemble'.

Christopher Suckling is a continuo cellist noted for his 'captivating expressivity'. He has performed and recorded with artists such Plácido Domingo and Rolando Villazón whilst his work as a director has been described as 'scintillating', 'dynamic' and 'containing moments of real beauty'. Christopher has broadcast live as a soloist and chamber musician on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM; recent recordings have been critically praised for the quality of his tone, the Independent citing the 'warmth of the cello sonorities', whilst a five star review in the BBC Music Magazine noted 'particular highlights in Christopher Suckling's resonant cello'. He combines his performing career with doctoral research at City University and Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he is working towards a deeper understanding of the realisation of recitative by the violoncellist.

John Kitchen is a Senior Lecturer in Music and University Organist in the University of Edinburgh. He conducts the Edinburgh University Singers, is Edinburgh City Organist with duties at the Usher Hall, and Director of Music at Old Saint Paul's Episcopal Church. He gives many solo recitals both in the UK and further afield, and also plays regularly with several ensembles, covering a wide range of musical styles. In addition, he is much in demand as a continuo player, accompanist, lecturer, examiner, adjudicator, writer and reviewer. John has recorded extensively for both Priory and for the Edinburgh-based label, Delphian Records.