



Saturday 14 June 2014

7.30pm

St Cecilia's Hall

CANZONA

Theresa Caudle · violin and cornett

Rebecca Miles · violin and recorder

Emily White · violin and sackbut

Alastair Ross · organ and harpsichord

Venetian Graces

Instrumental music from 17th -century Venice and beyond



The Sybert Summer Concert Series

Venetian Graces

Instrumental music from 17th -century Venice and beyond

Sonata con tre violini

Giovanni Gabrieli (1553/6 – 1612)

Sinfonia Prima

Gagliarda terza detta 'La Favorita'

La Sua Corrente

Salamone Rossi (1570? – c1630)

Sonata seconda a sopran solo

Dario Castello (early 17th century)

O quam tu pulchra es

Alessandro Grandi (1575/80 – 1630)

Sonata Terza

Giovanni Batista Fontana (d. c.1630)

Canzon sesta a due, canto e basso

Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583 – 1643)

Prima sonata a due soprani

Dario Castello

Sonata 16 a tre violini

Giovanni Batista Fontana

INTERVAL

Il Monteverde – Balletto Alemanno a due

Sonata sopra 'Fuggi dolente core'

Sonata Terza per tre violini

Passacalio à 4

Biagio Marini (1587 – 1663)

Toccata Settima

Michelangelo Rossi (1601/02 – 1656)

Canzon nona per doi violini e flauto

Giovanni Picchi (early 17th century)

Canzone 'La Loda' à 2 violini

Chiaccona – Canzone a 2 violini

Tarquinio Merula (1590/95 – 1665)

Capriccio 10 a tre cornetti o violini

Capriccio 26 a tre cornetti

Johann Vierdanck (c.1605 – 1646)

In the early years of the 17th century The Most Serene Republic of Venice was a Mecca for musicians, drawing the finest composers, instrumentalists and singers from around Italy and beyond. Other important hubs of musical activity in Italy were cities such as Rome and Bologna, but the wealth of the Venetian Republic and its pride, independence and taste for splendour created the institutions that kindled some of the most important and influential developments in baroque music.

Large groups of instrumentalists were employed, not only at the Basilica of San Marco where the Doge regularly worshipped, but in many of the other churches throughout Venice. The confraternities of rich merchants who sponsored charitable works and patronised the arts were at their height around the turn of the 17th century and the 'schools' where they congregated, such as the beautiful 'Scuola di San Rocco', also employed substantial groups of musicians. In addition there were at least seven groups of *'piffari'* - mostly wind players on trumpets, trombones, cornetts, shawms, recorders and bagpipes - who performed concerts in public squares. These groups of musicians interlaced and their duties overlapped but the volume of employment, and its prestigious nature, attracted the finest players. Music played a large part in church and the more important the feast day the grander the scale of composition; players would accompany the voices in the service but also play instrumental items between the parts of the

Mass. Then there were grand processions requiring music on state occasions such as the coronation of a doge and also for the confraternities; each was obliged to provide a company of singers and instrumentalists on special occasions such as Good Friday and other feast days – as many as forty a year. There were also spectacular concerts given in the schools themselves; Thomas Coryat, the English traveller and diarist, attended one such concert at the Scuola di San Rocco in 1608 and wrote '*This feast consisted principally of Musicke, both vocal and instrumentall.....so superexcellant, that it did even ravish and stupifie all those strangers that never heard the like*'. Similarly magnificent performances were occasioned by state banquets at the Doge's Palace. Venetian theatres were home to some of the latest developments in opera and although the singers were almost exclusively accompanied by *basso continuo* instruments such as harpsichords and chitarrones (large lutes with bass strings), melodic instruments were used to provide interludes between acts, and dance music. Dance movements such as galliards and correntes were also needed for the dazzling balls held during Carnival and other times.

Venice was the original home of music publishing and during the first half of the seventeenth century the two rival companies of Vincenti and Magni were responsible for the most important publications of instrumental works. Through the printing press the influence of Venetian style spread far and wide. One of the greatest and most innovative composers of instrumental music was Giovanni Gabrieli, organist at St. Mark's and at San Rocco. He is a towering figure in the development of a style that united elements of the more archaic polyphonic style of the sixteenth century and the '*seconda prattica*' or new musical style of the early seventeenth century where a vocal melody over a bass line with chordal accompaniment expressed above all the sentiments of the words. This very personal and passionate mode of expression in vocal music was incorporated into instrumental writing, where instruments took the place of the voices, either alone or in pairs, occasionally in groups of three, accompanied by a *basso continuo* part played by a keyboard or chitarrone. Stylistic distinctions between such compositions, typically labelled *canzona*, *sonata* or *sinfonia*, are blurred but in very general terms one can say that the *canzona* incorporated the old-fashioned use of a lively fugal theme, often based on an opening dactylic rhythm, whereas the *sonata* tended towards a more solemn and expressive mood. What unites them loosely is a one-movement form, usually in several contrasting parts, in which lively and often virtuoso writing may be interspersed with slow, expressive passages, and aria or dance-like triple-time sections.

Unsurprisingly, given the emergence of this style, the instruments which most successfully imitated the human voice were the most highly prized. At the end of the sixteenth century the cornett reigned supreme, praised not only for its vocal qualities (helped by its capability for nuanced dynamics) but also for its virtuosity. Around 1600, Venetian instrumental ensembles were dominated by the finest players of the instrument – Dalla Casa and Bassano were two such who consecutively held the post of '*maestro di concerto*' (leader of the instrumental ensemble) at St. Mark's. Gradually, during the first part of the 17th century, the

violin began to gain supremacy over the cornett, certainly as a result of the fine instruments being produced in northern Italy at the time and possibly aided by the terrible outbreak of plague in Venice in 1630, which is thought to have killed off many of her finest musicians. For a long while though the two instruments were considered completely interchangeable and mixed ensembles of wind and strings, including sackbut (the English name for the old, narrow-bored trombone), dulcian or *fagotto* (precursor to the bassoon) and members of the violin family, were the norm. Many of the title pages of the publications from which we are playing music tonight specify the diversity of suitable instruments intended; for instance, the full title of Fontana's collection is '*Sonate a 1, 2, 3 per il Violino, o Cornetto, Fagotto, Chitarone, Violoncino o simile altro Istromento*', but the most common alternative, often found at the top of a piece, is for '*violino o cornetto*'. However, the recorder was also widely played in Venice at the time and we can safely assume it to be a suitable alternative. Composers of instrumental music were normally players themselves, often organists who were particularly highly educated in musical theory and the art of composition and who would have been largely responsible for providing music for church services. However, other instrumentalists also excelled in composition; for instance Castello was a virtuoso cornettist and Marini a fine violinist, who helped to develop a more idiomatic style of writing for the violin.

The inclusion of the two *Capricci* by Vierdanck at the end of tonight's concert is testimony to the influence of Venetian composition abroad. Vierdanck was probably from Saxony, studied composition as a boy in Dresden with Schütz – who himself had been a pupil of Giovanni Gabrieli in Venice – and played both violin and cornett. Unusually he includes several pieces for either two or three instruments without a *basso continuo* – a rather special texture – but one could be forgiven for assuming, on hearing the '*Capriccio a tre cornetti*' (played tonight on violins) that it is the work of a Venetian.

My motivation for putting this programme together was a desire to get together with my two female friends and colleagues who like me, combine playing the baroque violin with early wind instruments. It is rare these days for musicians to mix wind and strings and it seems to have been rare in the 17th century too. Indeed, the only places in Venetian society where women instrumentalists would have been tolerated at all at that time, let alone when distorting their faces by blowing wind instruments, would have been at the famous *ospedali* where young foundling girls were given the benefits of a conservatoire-style musical education but played unseen behind grilles. The reputation of the performances of these young ladies, especially at the Pietà and the Mendicanti, was very high and we know from inventories there that they played a wide range of instruments including trumpets, trombones, cornetts, violins and violas, harpsichords, organs and theorbos. I hope that the variety of textures we can achieve by using so many different combinations of instruments will conjure up an unusually exotic array of colours and that you will enjoy these sounds as well as being able, in these emancipated days, to see us as well as hear us!

CANZONA was formed in 1992 and comprises some of this country's leading players of period instruments. The versatility of its director Theresa Caudle, who plays both the violin and cornett, creates the stimulus for a flexible line-up of string and wind instruments and many of Canzona's concerts are as a chamber group. They are often joined by a singer and have performed with many distinguished soloists including James Bowman and Peter Harvey. The players of Canzona have a particular passion for 17th century music, but whatever they are playing, from Monteverdi to Mozart, they make every effort to play on appropriate instruments for the period.

Canzona is frequently expanded to orchestral proportions and has performed with many outstanding conductors and choirs including Stephen Layton, both with Polyphony and the Holst Singers, with whom they have given performances of *Messiah* and Bach's Passions, *Christmas Oratorio*, and *B Minor Mass* in St John's Smith Square, King's College Cambridge, Salisbury Cathedral and Romsey Abbey. Canzona has a long-standing association with the Leith Hill Musical Festival, in which performances include J.S. Bach's *St. John & St. Matthew Passions*, *Magnificat*, and *Brandenburg Concerto No.3*; C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificat*; Handel's *Messiah* and Monteverdi's *Vespers*. Other engagements have included appearances at the Royal Festival Hall, St Martin in the Fields, the Three Choirs Festival, the Spitalfields Festival, Wells Cathedral, St Albans Cathedral, Blackburn Cathedral, the Bradford Festival Choral Society, and Trinity College Cambridge. For two years Canzona was the Resident Ensemble at Magdalen College, Oxford, giving a series of concerts and workshops there. Engagements in 2014 include performances of their 'Venetian Graces' programme in Edinburgh, Stour Festival, Winchester Festival and the Sastamala Gregoriana Festival in Finland, two performances of the *St. Matthew Passion* in Dorking and Burford, Bach's *Magnificat* with The Bristol Bach Choir and Monteverdi's *Vespers* with the Chelmsford Cathedral Choirs.

Canzona has made two recordings, both of which have received high praise from the critics; Motets by André Campra (with soloists Philippa Hyde, Rodrigo del Pozo and Peter Harvey) on the EtCetera label, and Theresa's solo album of 17th- century Italian sonatas for violin and cornett 'Violino o Cornetto' on Nimbus Alliance.

Theresa Caudle's career started on the cornett as a teenager, when she became leader of The London Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble. She subsequently became increasingly active as a baroque violinist, playing with many of the leading period-instrument ensembles in this country, such as The English Concert, The English Baroque Soloists and The Brandenburg Consort. One of her main commitments has been to The Parley of Instruments, of which she was a principal member for twenty-five years and with which she made over fifty recordings. She directs her own ensemble, Canzona, is regular leader for several other ensembles such as English Touring Opera's baroque orchestra, The Old Street Band, and also plays with The Sixteen, The London Handel Orchestra and The Monteverdi String Band. Theresa is a tutor on several courses for baroque music including 'Stylish Baroque' at Jackdaws, and 'Baroque Chamber Music at A415' at Benslow.

Rebecca Miles completed the performers' course studying recorder and baroque violin at Trinity College of Music in 1987. In the same year she made her London debut at the Wigmore Hall as winner of the Moeck Medal for solo recorder. She has performed and recorded over one hundred discs with virtually all of the leading London period instrument orchestras, appearing throughout Europe, as well as South America, Japan, Hong Kong the USSR and Australia. As violinist and obbligato recorder player she has worked with orchestras including The English Concert, The Sixteen, The Academy of Ancient Music, Collegium Musicum 90, Florilegium, and The Gabrieli Consort and recorded concertos with The King's Consort, The Orchestra of The Age of Enlightenment, the Hanover Band and The Brandenburg Consort. As well as her orchestral work she has also recorded solo recorder for film and television. Since 1990 she has been Professor of Recorder at Trinity College of Music. She teaches at Winchester College, as well as giving lecture recitals, master classes and examining at the UK Conservatoires.

Emily White studied sackbut at The Royal Academy of Music with Sue Addison. As well as her work with ECSE, Emily plays with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The Sixteen, Gabrieli Consort and Players and the Academy of Ancient Music. Emily also plays the baroque violin having studied with Walter Reiter and Rachel Podger. In 2012 she made use of this doubling in concerts in Germany and Holland with Suonar Cantando and Scorpio Collectief. Emily has played in productions at Shakespeare's Globe since its opening season and is performing in the 2012 production of *Twelfth Night*. Emily plays modern trombone too and is a member of Chaconne Brass and Pandora's Box which both explore contemporary music. Emily also freelances with English National Ballet, Orchestra of the Swan and the National Orchestra of Wales, with whom she played in the 2012 BBC Proms. Emily teaches sackbut at Birmingham Conservatoire and Dartington International Summer School. She has coached and given workshops at Trinity College of Music, The Royal Academy of Music, St Mary's Music School, Edinburgh, and she co-directs the Huntly Summer School.

Alastair Ross studied at New College, Oxford, where he gained a First in Music. He then studied in New York and worked as an organist and choirmaster in Connecticut for two years. He was organist and choirmaster at High Wycombe Parish Church from 1972-82, where he was fortunate to be able to work with a men and boys' choir of cathedral standard. In 1982 Alastair was appointed Director of Music at St. Margaret's Westminster, where he stayed for six years. For ten years he taught and conducted at the Britten/Pears School in Snape on courses devoted to Bach and Handel performance. His solo recitals have included Bach's Goldberg Variations at the Wigmore Hall. Alastair is principal keyboard player with the Academy of Ancient Music and plays with several chamber groups. Alastair directs Concerto delle Donne, a three-soprano group whose members are his wife Gill, Donna Deam and Faye Newton. They specialise in the fascinating repertoire for sopranos and continuo from 17th- and 18th-century Italy and France. Their first CD, of music by Carissimi, was released by Signum Records in

March 2003, and a further CD, of music by Charpentier, was released early in 2006. For three years he has coached the choir and solo singers at Aestas Musica, the International Summer School of Baroque Music and Dance in Varazdin, Croatia.

A note about the instruments

Two of our violins are made locally in Bishops Waltham by Paul Denley, matched copies of the 17th-century Brescian maker Maggini, and all three are set up as they would have been in these very early days of violin-making and make a significantly different sound to more commonly heard baroque violins set up for music of a century later. Our wind instruments are also faithful modern copies of originals.

The harpsichord used in tonight's concert was made in Italy, probably in Florence, around 1620. It originally had a different keyboard arrangement than at present, having some of the natural keys split into two, so that the player could get separate e-flat and d-sharp notes, for example. This was comparatively popular in the first half of the seventeenth century when meantone tuning was used, but lost its value as tunings closer to modern equal temperament began to be employed. The instrument was therefore altered in the early eighteenth century to its present arrangement with a chromatic C-d3 compass, ideal for use as both a solo and accompaniment instrument. This alteration work was carried out in the workshop of Cristofori, the inventor of the piano, or one of his pupils. The instrument is made of cypress, a common wood in Italian harpsichord making, and has a thin case. It therefore sits in a separate painted outer case which protects the harpsichord from any damage.

The organ used tonight is made in England around 1680. Although built fairly closely in the style of the famous builder 'Father' Smith, the actual maker is unknown. Although few chamber organs from the 17th century survive, they must have been comparatively common, and were regularly used to accompany other instruments such as viol or recorder ensembles. Characteristic of these instruments are narrow-scaled wooden pipes (the few metal pipes in this instrument are modern replacements from the mid-twentieth century) which give a soft sound, ideal for their supporting role. The instrument has three registers, 8'4'2', all of which divide in the middle of the compass to allow different registrations in the bass and treble. The grey colour on the exterior is not original, but it is most likely that the scenes inside the doors date from the 17th century.

Dr Darryl Martin Principal Curator, Musical Instrument Museums Edinburgh St Cecilia's Hall

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