
CONCERTS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Spring - Summer 2016

Tuesday 22 March 2016

1.10pm

City of Edinburgh Methodist Church

Alex McCartney · lute

Programme of works by WEISS



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Suite in D Minor

Silvius Leopold Weiss (1687-1750)

Preludie

Allemande

Courante

Bourée

Menuet

Suite in F Major

Silvius Leopold Weiss

Praelude

Allemande

Courante

Bourée

Sarabande

Menuet

Gigue

Menuet

Menuet

Gavotte

Silvius Leopold Weiss was born in 1687 in Grottkau near Breslau, the capital of Silesia. He was taught the lute, along with his brother and sister, by his father, Johann Jacob (1662-1754) who was described by Ernst Gottlieb Baron as a 'profound musician, lute and theorbo-player'.

In 1706, Count Karl Philipp of Palatinat-Neuburg took Silvius Leopold in his service. Then from 1710 Weiss worked for the Polish Prince Alexander Sobieski, who lived in exile in Rome. Prince Alexander's court created an opportunity for him to meet both Scarlatti, the organ-player Bernardo Pasquini, Handel, and Heinichen. Weiss would regularly accompany the Prince on his visits to other courts. His virtuosic performances were universally admired.

On August 23rd of 1718, he was appointed as a chamber musician for the Prince Elector of Saxony Augustus the Strong, who had been King of Poland since 1697. This highly prized position was based in Dresden; a cosmopolitan centre for arts and sciences. Weiss was the most highly paid musician in the court and regularly received unrequested increases to his annual income.

In 1722 the violinist Petit, a pupil of Tartini, supposedly as an act of vengeance, tried to bite off part of Weiss's thumb. Weiss must have enjoyed the court of Dresden, proven by his refusal to join the Imperial court in Vienna on a much increased salary. In August 1739, Weiss met J.S. Bach in Leipzig: several meetings fostered the start of their long friendship. J.S. Bach occasionally went to the court of Dresden as his son W.F. Bach became the organ-player at Sainte Sophie in the same town.

Weiss didn't seem to be interested in publishing his works. Of his 650+ known works, only one short piece was published when he was alive by Telemann in 1728 to serve as a tablature example in the volume 'Loyal Music Master'.

On October 16th 1750, Weiss died, leaving his widow, Marie-Elizabeth, and 7 children. Johann Adolf Faustinus was the only one of them to follow his steps as a lute-player at the court of Dresden.

Recently described as 'a very good lutenist which one has a desire to hear more from' [SFL], **Alex McCartney** has a busy performing schedule which takes him to concert halls across the world, from Carnegie to Wigmore.

In 2015 Alex released his debut solo album 'Mèsangeau's Experiments' to critical acclaim, in which his playing was described as, 'sensitive and musical' [EMR]. His next solo album 'Elizabeth's Lutes' is due this month and features lesser-known music from the English Golden Age. Alex is a resident artist with his own record label Veterum Musica.

Alex regularly performs as a soloist with ensembles such as Ensemble Libro Primo, Ensemble Marsyas, Cupid and Death, and Poeticall Musicke. He has recently given solo recitals at York Early Music Festival 2015 and the UK Lute Society. As a continuo player Alex's playing has been described as 'sinewy and sensuous, ornaments rarely exaggerated' [Observer]. He holds principal positions in La Nuova Musica and Poeticall Musicke. He is also a regular guest principal for The Academy of Ancient Music.

Aside from his main musical commitments, Alex also enjoys working regularly with artists such as Emma Kirkby, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The English Concert, The English Baroque Soloists, Brecon Baroque (Podger), The Early Opera Company, The Royal Opera House, His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts, Lutes and Ukes, and The Royal Ballet.

Alex can be heard plucking away on recordings released by the following labels: Veterum Musica, Harmonia Mundi, Hyperion, and Linn. Occasionally Alex consults and teaches for film and television productions, the most recent being an adaptation of 'Wolf Hall' by the BBC, broadcast in January 2015. In addition to on-set consultancy, Alex had the challenge of teaching the actors Damian Lewis and Max Fowler to play the lute to a high standard in the short space of one month.

Alex teaches the lute at the University of Aberdeen and at the Early Music Shop in London. In his spare time Alex enjoys making lutes in his studio in Glasgow.