



LA SERENISSIMA

directed by Adrian Chandler

ECCO GLI ITALIANI!

Saturday 29 May 2021 7.30 pm

Toll Gavel United Church

ECCO GLI ITALIANI!

- Introduzione in G
for strings & continuo
*Largo e spicco – Allegro assai –
Largo e spicco – Allegro assai –
Largo e spicco – Adagio
Allegro*
- Lorenzo Gaetano Zavateri (1690–1764)**
- Concerto for recorder,
strings & continuo in F
*Allegro
Largo
Allegro assai*
- Giuseppe Sammartini (1695–1750)**
- Concerto XII for strings
& continuo in D, op. 6
*Allegro
Grave
Allegro mà non troppo*
- Evaristo Felice Dall’Abaco (1675–1742)**
- Concerto for violin, strings
& continuo in A, RV 353
*Allegro
Andante
Allegro*
- Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)**
- Concerto for sopranino recorder,
strings & continuo in C, RV 443
*Allegro
Largo
Allegro molto*
- Vivaldi**
- Concerto for violin, strings
& continuo in E minor, RV 281
*Allegro
Largo
Allegro*
- Vivaldi**
- Ouverture-Suite for strings
& continuo in D
*Ouverture – Fuga
Aria – Allegro
Aria – Presto
Rondeau
Bourée
Aria – Adagio
Ciaccona*
- Giuseppe Antonio Brescianello (c. 1690–1758)**

LA SERENISSIMA

Adrian Chandler *director/violin*

Tabea Debus *recorders*

Oliver Cave, Guy Button, Hatty Haynes *violin 1*

Agata Daraskaite, Simon Kodurand, Jim O'Toole *violin 2*

Elitsa Bogdanova, Thomas Kirby, Thomas Kettle *viola*

Jonathan Manson, Carina Drury *cello*

Zaynab Martin *double bass*

Lynda Sayce *theorbo*

Robin Bigwood *harpsichord*

Looking at the variety of Italian baroque instrumental music on offer today, one could be forgiven for thinking that Vivaldi had faced little competition. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Whilst the volume of music that flowed from Vivaldi's pen was unusual, plenty of composers stood ready to fulfil the needs of the regional courts and churches throughout Italy. Even abroad, no court was complete without its resident Italian maestro or group of Italian string players. Indeed, Dall'Abaco, Brescianello and Sammartini all pursued their careers north of the Alps.

Born in Milan to the French oboist Alexis Saint-Martin, Giuseppe Sammartini spent his early career working alongside his brother, Giovanni Battista, as an orchestral oboist. His playing earned him a fine reputation, perhaps because – as one is led to believe – rivalry was sparse. This state of affairs was noted by the visiting flautist and theorist Johann Joachim Quantz, who wrote that Giuseppe was the only good wind player at the Teatro Regio Ducale.

Soon after Quantz's visit Sammartini left Milan, first for Brussels, and then for London where he arrived in 1729; he remained in London until his death. His fame as a virtuoso spread quickly, and presently Sammartini was busy giving concerts and sending his compositions to the London printing presses. It is the recorder concerto, however, that is probably his best-known work. This concerto survives in a non-autograph source in Stockholm's Statens Musikbibliotek, a remnant of a former trend for Italian repertoire harboured by many contemporaneous Scandinavian music societies.

In contrast to Sammartini's northern choice of abode, Brescianello and Dall'Abaco opted to stay closer to Italy. Dall'Abaco joined the Bavarian court in c. 1704 but, following the Elector Maximilian II Emmanuel's defeat by the Duke of Marlborough at the Battle of Blenheim (1704), he fled with the Elector to Belgium, and

thenceforth – following another defeat by Marlborough at the Battle of Ramilles (1706) – to France. This prolonged exile exposed Dall’Abaco to a large amount of French music whose influence can be found in his six published sets of sonatas and concertos. His general style, however, remains predominantly Italian as shown by the final concerto of his opus 6, its fiery energy paying tribute to the concertos of Albinoni and Vivaldi.

The Treaty of Rastatt (1714) marking the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession signalled a return to Munich for Dall’Abaco. Whilst the Elector arrived from the north, his wife, the Electress Theresa Kunegunde arrived from Venice with an entourage that included the violinist and composer Giuseppe Antonio Brescianello.

Brescianello’s stay in Munich didn’t last long. Following the death of Johann Christoph Pez (1716), Oberkapellmeister of the Württemberg court in Stuttgart, Brescianello successfully applied for the post of Director musices. Even though his initial brief was to take charge of the court’s chamber music, Brescianello, perhaps with one eye on the post of Oberkapellmeister, decided to dedicate his ‘opera pastorale’ *Tisbe* to Duke Eberhard Ludwig in January 1718; he eventually succeeded to his preferred position in 1721. Although Brescianello’s fortunes ebbed and flowed in tandem with those of the court (he lost his post completely between 1737 and 1744), he remained in nearby Ludwigsburg until his death in 1758.

He was not a prolific composer, but his surviving output is of an exceedingly high quality; it is mostly Italianate but also incorporates elements of the French style as well as a thorough harmonic outlook popular amongst the German courts.

His employer, Eberhard Ludwig, Duke of Württemberg, had fought on the side of the Austrians against the French during the War of the Spanish Succession, so it is unsurprising that the music of his court tended to look towards Italy rather than France. That said, Eberhard was no stranger to the French style; his visit to Louis XIV at Versailles shortly before 1700 made a profound impression upon him, perhaps later prompting Brescianello to compose a collection of six orchestral suites and a stand-alone Chaconne in the French style. The present Suite in D major is set apart from the others by virtue of a massive concluding Ciaconna instead of the customary giga or gigue. Otherwise, the work conforms to the layout of its fellow suites with the Overture being followed by a collection of dance movements.

Bologna, in the year 1690, was witness to the birth of two violinist composers; whilst Brescianello found modest fame outside his native Italy, Lorenzo Gaetano Zavateri, a pupil of Torelli, chose to pursue his career in Livorno, Venice, Ferrara and Bologna. His surviving oeuvre suggests that he was first and foremost a violinist, and a composer second. That said, his two published sets – one of sonatas and one of concertos – show considerable skill; his opus 1 concertos (c. 1735) received praise from Padre Martini for their ‘well-refined intelligence’. The set comprises one concerto for two violins, five for solo violin, and six for strings and continuo alone. The opening *Introduzione* was probably intended for the theatre, its arresting slow movements and energetic allegros being perfectly designed to quieten a rowdy audience.

Without a doubt, the quantity of instrumental music composed by Vivaldi is staggering. To have composed around 500 concertos and 100 sonatas is even more impressive when one considers that Vivaldi prioritised his career as an impresario and composer of operas over everything else.

As well as writing works for his own private use, he also supplied many concertos to the Ospedale della Pietà (the Venetian founding institution with which he was associated for much of his life) and to the theatre, where his concertos provided entr’acte entertainments.

The theatre is an unlikely destination for the violin concertos presented here, both of which lack the rubric ‘*senza cembali*’ (without harpsichords), a term commonly found amongst his operatic concertos where the presence of more than one harpsichord was standard (elsewhere it was unusual). It is more likely that they were either written for himself or for the Pietà where his legendary violin technique lived on through his famous pupils.

Both works were probably written during the 1730s and survive today as part of Vivaldi’s personal manuscript collection, now held in the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Turin. The manuscripts show Vivaldi’s compositional process with numerous corrections and alterations. The slow movement to the Concerto in A was initially intended to open with a *tutti* introduction (‘solo’ is written above the start of the second phrase) whilst the Concerto in E minor shows his inclination to tinker with works that had already been finished. Not only does this work feature an alternative ending, but it also includes (unusually) an autograph copy of the cembalo part whose opening is marked *piano* instead of the arresting *forte molto* found in the first page of the autograph score.

Vivaldi was also known to experiment with changes in instrumentation. The manuscript for the Concerto for sopranino recorder clearly shows the heading 'Concerto per Flautino' written in the centre of the upper margin; to the right of this is written (presumably at a later date) 'Gl'istromenti trasportati alla 4a bassa' allowing the concerto to be played down a fourth on a larger recorder.

The destination for this concerto was almost certainly the Pietà, which evidently possessed a player capable of playing Vivaldi's three virtuoso flautino concertos and the C-minor concerto for treble recorder. If a player of this talent had worked on the freelance circuit, it is likely that someone else would also have composed concertos to add to their repertoire. The fact that Vivaldi's concertos survive in their own bubble, suggests that their intended soloist was a player with little access to outside movement, like a member of the Pietà's *figlie di coro*.

© Adrian Chandler

Adrian Chandler is recognised internationally as a leading interpreter of Italian baroque music with an ‘avant-garde approach that would have awed Hendrix’ (*The Guardian*). Adrian founded **La Serenissima** in 1994, whilst a student of Rodney Friend at the Royal College of Music, channelling his love affair with Vivaldi into a lifetime’s mission.

With La Serenissima, he has performed a host of recitals, concertos and operas for major festivals including Bruges, Buxton, Cheltenham, Lake District Summer Music, Lichfield, Spitalfields and York, as well as for concerts in Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malta, Mexico and Spain. His performances have been broadcast by BBC Radio 3, Classic FM, Scala Radio and by radio stations throughout the world.

Adrian has driven La Serenissima’s ambitious and highly-acclaimed recording work, creating an extensive catalogue encompassing music by Albinoni, Bach, Brescianello, Caldara, Corelli, Dall’Abaco, Legrenzi, Locatelli, Lotti, Montanari, Navarra, Pisendel, Porta, Sammartini, Scarlatti, Tartini, Telemann, Torelli, Valentini, Vandini, Veracini, Vivaldi and Composer X. These recordings have been widely praised through repeated award nominations, regular focus from specialist and broadsheet press and radio, and frequent rave reviews. He has had the honour of accepting two *Gramophone Awards* in the Baroque Instrumental category for La Serenissima’s albums *The French Connection* (2010) and *The Italian Job* (2017).

The Arts and Humanities Research Council awarded Adrian a fellowship at Southampton University to research the development of the North Italian violin concerto, 1690 to 1740; this research culminated in the release of the third album in La Serenissima’s North Italian Violin Concerto series. He subsequently held a two-year post at Southampton as Turner Sims Professor. During the first 2020 UK lockdown, Adrian edited a Vivaldi violin concerto daily: the campaign reached fans, musicians, scholars and Vivaldi enthusiasts across the globe via social media and will form the basis of a future publication on Vivaldi’s violin method.

Adrian has been guest director/soloist with a range of other groups throughout his career, demonstrating great versatility in working with musicians using both period and modern instruments; for the 2020–21 season he has been invited to direct projects for Concerto Copenhagen in Denmark and Deutsche Philharmonie Merck in Germany.

As a soloist and chamber musician **Tabea Debus** appears regularly with La Serenissima and The English Concert, and has performed at the Wigmore Hall, at Early Music Festivals in London, York and Brecon, the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Schleswig-Holstein Musikfestival, Musica Antiqua Bolzano, Edinburgh International festivals, and many more. She is a regular guest on the BBC Radio 3's In Tune and Early Music Show, and has released five solo discs to date, most recently *Ohrwurm* (Delphian Records).

Awards include the 2020 CAG/Richard S. Weinert Award for Innovation in Classical Music, the soloist prize at the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, first prize at the Society of Recorder Players/Moock International Solo Recorder Competition in London (both in 2019), as well as at the 2014 Johann Heinrich Schmelzer and 2011 Hülsta Woodwinds International Competitions. Tabea was also a City Music Foundation Artist (2016–18), Handel House Talent (2016–17) and St John's Smith Square Young Artist (2015–16), and has held scholarships from the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes. She was selected by Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) in 2018, and subsequently joined the Concert Artists Guild (CAG) roster in 2019.

Passionate about outreach work, Tabea teaches recorder at Wells Cathedral School and has led composition and chamber music workshops at the Royal Academy of Music and Cambridge University. She has collaborated with Music Masters, Jackdaws Music Education Trust, the RAM's Open Academy in London-based primary schools and at the Royal London Hospital, making the music she enjoys performing accessible to children from all backgrounds. In collaboration with other musicians, artists and actors she is constantly developing new outreach projects, including the 'Endo the Earthworm' series, the music-art-game 'soundshapes', and play-along library Continuo Lines. Tabea has also been an adjudicator for the British Composer Awards and the German youth music competition Jugend musiziert.

Born in Würzburg, Germany, Tabea studied at the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts with Michael Schneider and at the Royal Academy of Music in London with Pamela Thorby. Graduating with the Principal's Prize, she went on to be appointed Meaker Fellow at the RAM for 2016–17, and is now based in North London.

tabeadebus.com

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