



THE ENGLISH CONCERT AND KRISTIAN BEZUIDENHOUT

Echoes of Joy and Longing

Monday 15 July 2pm – 4pm St John's Church

Director **Kristian Bezuidenhout**
Harpsichord

Violin **Nadja Zwiener (leader); Tuomo Suni;**
Elizabeth MacCarthy
Viola **Alfonso Leal del Ojo**
Cello **Joseph Crouch**
Double bass **Guiseppe Ciraso-Cali**
Bassoon **Katrin Lazar**
Recorder **Katrin Lazar; Tabea Debus**
Organ **Stephen Farr**
Soprano **Lauren Lodge-Campbell**
Mezzo **Katie Bray**
Tenor **Hugo Hymas**
Bass **Matthew Brook**

The English Concert is a baroque orchestra playing on period instruments and based in London. Founded in 1972 and directed from the harpsichord by Trevor Pincock for 30 years, it is now under the artistic direction of Harry Bicket and principal guest Kristian Bezuidenhout. Nadja Zwiener has been orchestra leader (concertmaster) since September 2007.

Ode for St Cecilia's Day: 'Welcome to all the pleasures', Z. 339
1. **Symphony**; 2. **'Welcome to all the pleasures that delight' – alto, tenor and bass soloists, chorus**; 3. **'Here the Deities approve' – alto solo**; 4. **'While joys celestial their bright souls invade' – soprano 1 and 2 and tenor soloists**; 5. **'Then lift up your voices' – alto, tenor and bass soloists, chorus**; 6. **'Beauty, thou scene of love' – tenor solo**; 7. **'In a consort of voices' – tenor solo, chorus**
Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

St Cecilia is the Christian patron-saint of musicians, whose annual feast-day is observed on 22 November. A music festival in her honour, held yearly to begin with, was established in London in 1683. Odes were specially written by leading poets such as John Dryden and Alexander Pope, and set to music by composers including Purcell and Handel. 'Welcome to all the pleasures' was composed for that very first London festival. Christopher Fishburn's text, like those of later Cecilian odes, celebrates music's power to soothe and uplift. The alto solo 'Here the Deities approve', took on an independent life of its own, as an instrumental piece with the title *A New Ground*.

Suite from the theatre music, with 'Evening Hymn' interspersed
1. **Overture from *The Gordian Knot Unty'd*, Z. 597**; 2. **Hornpipe from *The Fairy Queen*, Z. 629**; 3. **Slow Air from *The Virtuous Wife*, Z. 611**; 4. **Rondeau from *The Indian Queen*, Z. 630**; 5. **Evening Hymn, Z. 193**; 6. **Chacony in G minor, Z. 730.**
Henry Purcell

Purcell wrote theatre music sporadically throughout much of his career, including his only all-sung opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, but in the last five years or so of his life he composed a remarkable quantity of music for the stage, ranging from overtures, songs and dance pieces for spoken plays, to extravagant, so-called 'semi operas' such as *The Fairy Queen*. *The Gordian Knot Unty'd* United was a comedy, now lost, thought to be by poet and critic William Walsh (1662-1708). There is a record of a performance in the winter of 1690. The Overture is in the French style – a stately introduction, a quick main section, and a slow conclusion. *The Fairy Queen*, the most lavish of Purcell's theatre works, premiered in 1692, is an anonymous adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummernight's Dream*. The Hornpipe comes from the 'First Music' played, together with the 'Second Music', before the Overture.

The Virtuous Wife, or Good Luck at Last is a comedy by poet and dramatist Thomas D'Urfey (c. 1653–1723). Purcell's music is thought to have been written for a revival in 1695.

The Indian Queen was Purcell's last major work for the theatre. Adapted from a play by John Dryden and Sir Robert Howard, it is set against the background of

conflict between Aztecs and Incas. 'Rondeau' means the same as the more familiar 'rondo' – a piece built from repetitions of the opening, interspersed with contrasting sections.

Purcell's well-loved 'Now that the sun hath veiled his light', generally known as his 'Evening Hymn', is a serene domestic sacred song for voice and continuo.

Chacony, one of his most familiar instrumental pieces, may have originated either as music for a dance at Charles II's court, or as part of an otherwise lost theatre score. 'Chacony' (the anglicised form of 'Chaconne') indicates that it is a set of continuous variations over a repeated theme in the bass.

Cantata: 'Komm, du süße Todesstunde' (Come, death's sweet hour), BWV 161

1. **Aria. Alto. 'Komm, du süße Todesstunde' (Come, death's sweet hour)**; 2. **Recitativo. Tenor. 'Welt, deine Lust ist Last' (World, your pleasures are a burden)**; 3. **Aria. Tenor. 'Mein Verlangen ist...' (My desire is to embrace my Saviour)**; 4. **Recitativo. Alto. 'Der Schluß ist schon gemacht' (The end has already come)**; 5. **Chorus. 'Wenn es meines Gottes Wille' (If it is my God's will, it is my wish)**; 6. **Chorale. 'Der Leib zwar in der Erden' (Though my body, in the earth, is consumed by worms).**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Cantatas formed the most important musical element in the main Sunday and feast-day services in the Lutheran Church, and composing them was a major part of Bach's duties in his posts at Weimar (1708-1717) and Leipzig (from 1723). No. 161 was written for the sixteenth Sunday after Trinity, 27 September 1716. Salomon Franck's text expresses a longing for death as a release from earthly burdens and a gateway to the next world. The chorale tune known to English-speaking audiences as the 'Passion Chorale' appears in the first movement, in the upper line of the keyboard part, and it is set to the words of the concluding chorale.

Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G, BWV 1049

1. **Allegro**; 2. **Andante**; 3. **Presto.**

Johann Sebastian Bach

Bach composed his six Brandenburg Concertos at various times during his period as director of music to Prince Leopold of Cöthen from 1717 to 1723. They were given their collective name by Bach's nineteenth-century biographer Philip Spitta, referring to the presentation copy of the score which Bach sent to Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg, in March 1721, possibly in hope of a post at his court. The Brandenburg Concertos build on the structural outline of the Venetian solo concerto developed, particularly, by Vivaldi, whose music Bach studied intensively. They are all based on the Venetian three-movement (fast-slow-fast) pattern (modified in Nos 1 and 3). On another level they belong firmly to the genre of the baroque concerto grosso, in which groups of instruments are played off against the main ensemble.

Each of the concertos is scored for a different ensemble. No. 4 uses a solo group of violin and two *fiauti d'echo* ('echo-flutes'), by which, the evidence suggests, Bach meant treble recorders, played in today's performance. Rather than designating a specific type of instrument, he seems to be referring to their role in the concerto, given that the violin is undoubtedly the star of the show.

The first movement is in an infectious springy triple time, with the violin part reaching astonishing heights of virtuosity. In the second movement it takes something of a back seat, with a more prominent role for the two recorders, particularly the first, which has a decorative flourish at the end. The fugal third movement is powerfully energetic, with more breathtakingly virtuosic writing for the violin.