



signum
CLASSICS

HANDEL *in Italy* VOL.2

Benjamin Bevan • Mary Bevan • Sophie Bevan

London Early Opera
Bridget Cunningham *conductor*

HANDEL IN ITALY, VOL.2

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|--|--|--------|
| 1 | Overture to Agrippina , HWV 6 | [3.55] |
| 2 | <i>Sicut Sagittae</i> from Nisi Dominus , HWV 238
Benjamin Bevan <i>baritone</i> | [1.20] |
| 3 | Recitative: <i>Pure del Cielo</i> . | [1.01] |
| 4 | Aria: <i>Tu del Ciel ministro eletto</i> .
from Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno , HWV 46a
Sophie Bevan <i>soprano</i> | [6.22] |
| Cantata Poichè giuraro Amore , HWV 148 | | |
| 5 | Recitative: <i>Poichè giuraro Amore</i> | [1.20] |
| 6 | Aria: <i>Figli di rupe alpestra</i> | [6.11] |
| 7 | Recitative: <i>Io senza speme</i> | [1.02] |
| 8 | Aria: <i>Basterebbe a tor di vita</i>
Mary Bevan <i>soprano</i> | [2.13] |
| 9 | <i>Larghetto</i> from Sonata in G minor, HWV 580 | [2.25] |
| 10 | <i>Concerto</i> (Allegro) in G Major, HWV 487 | [1.26] |
| 11 | <i>Andante</i> in G major, HWV 487
Bridget Cunningham <i>harpsichord</i> | [1.31] |
| Cantata Dalla guerra amorosa , HWV 102a | | |
| 12 | Dalla guerra amorosa. | [0.28] |
| 13 | Non v'alletti un occhio nero. | [3.22] |
| 14 | Fuggite, sì fuggite! | [0.38] |

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| 15 | La bellezza è come un fiore | [2.19] |
| 16 | Fuggite, sì fuggite, a che serve d'amor.
Benjamin Bevan <i>baritone</i> | [1.10] |
| 17 | <i>Precipitoso nel mar che freme</i> from Aci, Galatea e Polifemo , HWV 72
Benjamin Bevan <i>baritone</i> | [3.02] |
| Trio Quel fior che all' alba ride , HWV 200 | | |
| 18 | <i>Quel fior che all' alba ride</i> | [5.06] |
| 19 | <i>È'un fior la vita</i>
Mary Bevan, Sophie Bevan & Benjamin Bevan <i>sopranos and baritone</i> | [2.40] |
| Trio Se tu non lasci amore , HWV 201a | | |
| 20 | <i>Se tu non lasci amore</i> | [3.46] |
| 21 | <i>Ma con chi parlo</i>
Mary Bevan, Sophie Bevan & Benjamin Bevan <i>sopranos and baritone</i> | [3.55] |
| Total timings: | | [55.12] |

BENJAMIN BEVAN • MARY BEVAN • SOPHIE BEVAN
LONDON EARLY OPERA
BRIDGET CUNNINGHAM CONDUCTOR

HANDEL IN ITALY

Volume 2

This series is designed to capture an image of significant moments in Handel's life through his travels and to look at Handel the man, placing him in his historical context through this CD booklet, with music of the time including a premiere recording of a cantata which sets the scene and provides a fuller picture for the appreciation of the listener.

At the turn of the seventeenth century, any young composer with a keen interest in the theatre is likely to have considered Northern Italian cities to be at the forefront of cultural developments. Italy was, after all, the country in which opera, oratorio and the chamber cantata were born. Certainly in Handel's case, the young composer showed a keen interest in touring Italy shortly after writing his first opera in Hamburg, *Almira*. One of his first anecdotal biographers, John Mainwaring, reported that Handel's interest in Italian opera was significantly enhanced by a meeting with the 'Prince of Tuscany'—Prince Gian Gastone de' Medici, the younger brother of the Grand Prince Ferdinando—who was so captivated by Handel's youthful compositions he demanded

an audience and encouraged the young composer to explore the very latest Italian music. Handel needed convincing at first as according to Mainwaring he "plainly confessed that he could see nothing in the Music". However, despite this and the fact he refused the Prince's offer of travel with his entourage, he did embark upon a three- year sojourn to Italy in 1706, age 21 after saving 200 ducats for the adventure so that he could make his own way independently "on his own bottom, as soon as he could make a purse for that occasion". The trip was a period of intense and rich musical activity, throughout which Handel's music underwent fundamental changes. Indeed, by the end of his long life, these changes had fuelled a career of unrivalled fluidity and longevity in both the operatic and oratorio genres.

Key to understanding Handel's later successes, therefore, is the consideration of these fertile Italian years that comprised not only of opera and instrumental works, but also, importantly, secular cantatas which were complete works in themselves and often bore the seeds for his later compositions. This recording further explores key works from Handel's Italian years (see **Handel in Italy Vol.1** Signum Records), including works that contain musical

inspiration which modern audiences recognise from later incarnations in operatic arias or the grand melodic lines of now-familiar oratorio favourites.

The composer Johann Mattheson, a colleague of Handel's from Hamburg, wrote that Handel travelled to Italy with a companion called Herr Von Benitz and if so, maybe he introduced Handel to society or acted as a patron. Although the Ruspoli accounts in Rome indicate that the extravagant food bills were for Handel and an unnamed companion, we hear nothing more of Von Benitz. The intrigue does not end there: once in Italy, Handel was no servant to aristocratic households supporting musical activities; rather, he was a house guest of several well-connected patrons who put him up in luxury and commissioned new works and presented him as their protégé to local society. We know little about Handel's first port of call, Florence (or perhaps Venice as Mainwaring suggests) but it made a convenient break in the journey to Rome. Such an invitation to Florence may have come directly from Prince Ferdinando de' Medici and it is worth noting that Handel returned to that city the following summer to write an opera, a genre forbidden in Rome by Papal edict. Possibly

whilst in Florence, Handel collected libretti which were sold at opera performances such as *Ariodante*, *Radamisto* and *Scipione* which he himself used later on. Ferdinando himself was an accomplished musician who had daily concerts and kept a large library of music which would have been a source of inspiration for the young Handel.

Handel had arrived in Rome by 1707 and his keyboard playing and spectacular compositions impressed his first patrons and supporters including Cardinal Carlo Colonna, Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili and the most wealthy and active Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni. Despite Handel's Lutheran faith and staunch Protestant upbringing, the most important compositions of his early months in Rome were intriguingly for the Roman Catholic Church and they signify a determination to display a full range of compositional skills despite going against much of his own beliefs and the teachings of his Church. It was probably Cardinal Colonna who commissioned the large-scale setting of the psalm *Dixit Dominus*, completed early in April 1707, as well as settings of two other Vesper psalms *Laudate Pueri* in D major and *Nisi Dominus* during July. Since the papal ban did not extend to oratorio, by May 1707

Cardinal Pamphilli commissioned and wrote Handel's first major libretto, the allegorical oratorio *Il Trionfo del tempo e del Disinganno*. This opportunity, more than most, possibly persuaded the composer to stay in Rome despite there being no opera house as such. Again, it is interesting that a young Lutheran composer should receive such hospitality and high profile commissions of key Latin texts from Catholic clergy and not be converted to Catholicism himself. Also worthy of note is how Handel set secular love poetry to music for his circle of Italian patrons and in doing so created wonderful material to which he returned many decades later.

It was through these Roman Cardinals that Handel also developed a network extending beyond the city limits. In particular, in Cardinal Ottoboni's Palazzo della Cancelleria, Handel had access to a significant music library and an opportunity to perform with the house band led by esteemed violinist and towering figure of Arcangelo Corelli. He later met the influential Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani and Marchese Francesco Maria Ruspoli who also supported him. The rewards of such circles were not only financial, Handel enjoyed access to several of the finest harpsichords and organs

and met many wonderful musicians such as Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti who showed mutual admiration for his work and he was captivated by the music of Gasparini and Lotti and several other fine Italian composers. He met the soprano Margherita Durastanti for whom Handel wrote many of his solo cantatas and they had a lasting partnership, as they continued to work together throughout their careers, notably in London.

Interestingly, Handel was treated as a distinguished house guest by his most influential secular patron, the music loving dignitary, Marchese Francesco Maria Ruspoli who commissioned Handel to write *La Resurrezione* the following Easter of 1708. In the same year, Ruspoli was made the first Prince of Cerveteri by Pope Clement XI in gratitude for funding mercenaries to defend the Papal States during the Spanish war. Ruspoli came from a Florentine banking family who settled in Rome and it is possible that a Florentine link enabled this particular contact. Ruspoli held a weekly conversazioni of the '*Accademia degli Arcadi*' a circle of noble dilettantes augmented by guests of the highest ranks of church or state from both Italy and abroad, and their musical

and literary protégés, like a 'Freemasonry' of the Arts. Handel was also invited to follow Ruspoli to his country palace at Vignanello where he continued composing and performing whilst enjoying country festivities. Perhaps also in Rome, Handel heard the travelling Pifferari which later inspired the drone and style of the pastoral Pifa in his Messiah.

Many questions still surround Handel's time in Italy including why he changed his mind and decided to go there in the first place as Mainwaring says "he was much at a loss to conceive how such great culture should be followed by so little fruit". Also we are not sure how he got there, whether it was an overland route south from Hamburg, possibly via his home town of Halle via Nuremburg, Munich, Innsbruck and onwards via the Brenner Pass to Northern Italy - or whether he travelled the longer traditional route up the Rhine to Basel, descending the Rhone Valley, passing Lyon and Marseille then perhaps sailing onwards to Italy.

During his tour, Handel stayed largely in Rome with excursions to Florence, Naples and Venice as well as in the country at Vignanello and Cerveteri and possibly returned to Hamburg

as well, which was a very long journey. The presence of conflicting marching armies in Italy in response to the lingering War of Spanish Succession and the very recent victory of Turin and surrender of Milan may have made travelling more than usually arduous. Many small Italian states were hedging their bets by active involvement or by simply attempting to preserve neutrality, as was the case with Venice. Negotiating these political sensitivities, enforced levies and imperial fiefdoms would have preoccupied most travellers and may have also influenced Handel's movements within Italy.

More information is also needed surrounding the remarkable work, the *Gloria*, still marked as HWV deest (See recording **Handel in Italy Vol.1** Signum Records) as despite its Catholic basis, exquisitely high calibre of composition and several similarities to other Handel masterpieces from this time, very little is known about the origin. Also a few rumours were spread, unfounded or not, of a youthful fling that Handel apparently had with the soprano Vittoria Tarquini, a favourite (and lover) of Prince Ferdinando de' Medici which may possibly explain why Handel did not seem to have secured any commissions directly



The Palazzo dell Cancelleria in Rome, by Giuseppe Vasi, 1754. This was a previous residence of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, one of the greatest patrons of the arts in eighteenth century Italy where he had constructed a theatre and held regular concerts where Handel, Corelli and other musicians met and performed music.

from the Medicis unless they just preferred the work of other artists. Finally another mystery shrouding this event is why Handel decided to leave Italy when he did, especially in view of his increasing popularity, financial support, and his immersion in a wealth of inspirational decadent music and art in Italy.

In seeking to understand the network of influences in operation at this time one is drawn into a web of social, political and possibly sexual narratives that underpin Handel's musical watershed. These two recordings, **Handel in Italy** explore the young composer's Italian years through an appreciation of his wide variety of musical styles: cantatas, sacred pieces, operatic works and instrumental compositions. Handel wrote prolifically during his stay in Italy, his output includes oratorios, operas, sonatas, instrumental works and sacred vocal masterpieces including over 100 cantatas. Handel was hugely inspired by the enormous reserve of talent in Italy and the high calibre of the star singers urged him to develop his aria style. It was a wonderful opportunity for Handel to write for voices of this quality and to encourage them to thrive and flourish as vocal personalities whilst sensitively supporting the individuality of his singers.

Following on from **Handel in Italy Vol.1**, London Early Opera's second volume continues Handel's Italian journey and gives a sample of some of Handel's finest music for voice during his time in Italy and gathers together again the internationally acclaimed soloists, the sopranos Sophie Bevan and Mary Bevan with their uncle, baritone Benjamin Bevan, conceived, researched and conducted by Bridget Cunningham.

The Music

Overture from Agrippina.

Venice (late 1709), HWV 6

In 1709 Handel travelled north to Venice as he had received a commission from the leading Italian opera house, Teatro San Giovanni Crisostomo theatre in Venice owned by the Grimani family. Handel was asked to write an opera and set Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani's sensational libretto *Agrippina* to music. It is unknown where exactly Handel stayed in Venice and despite a frustrating lack of evidence, it is possible that he met fellow composer Vivaldi there.

Agrippina, Handel's second Italian opera is a satirical comedy about sex, intrigue, treachery, jealousy, revenge and the lust for power. Set in ancient Rome during the time of the Emperor Nero, both libretto and opera are notable for their complex character portrayals: amorality, frailties and idiosyncrasies which are explored and developed while Handel's music often employs irony to distinguish between sincerity and scheming. To the informed observer, the opera could be seen to use Emperor Claudius as a metaphor to comment on the character of Pope Clement XI, the pontiff who frequently clashed politically with Grimani. With such a libretto, Handel was able to develop his presentation of characters with wonderfully humorous settings and a quasi-Shakespearian ability to understand and sympathize with his characters, revealing subtleties of their human nature. The recitatives are fast-paced with frequent use of asides where characters voice their true motivations to the audience, and the arias are generally short enough to keep up a sense of the dramatic narrative.

Venice was the first place in Italy to run operas on a commercial basis for a public audience rather than being solely supported by the

munificence of nobles, clergy or princes. *Agrippina* was timed to open the most popular carnival season and generated enormous success running for an unprecedented 27 performances. According to Mainwaring, enthusiastic audiences greeted every pause in the music with cries of '*Viva il caro Sassone!*' (Long live the dear Saxon!), establishing Handel's triumphant worldwide reputation before the international audience. Venice, which had attempted to preserve neutrality during the Spanish war, boasted a large number of diplomats who frequented the opera. Among them, Prince Ernst Georg of Hanover, brother of the Elector (the future George I of England), and the English ambassador, Charles Montagu, the Duke of Manchester. It is thought that one of these men may have invited Handel to visit their respective countries and helped pave his way for future work.

Despite its uncanny freshness, the music of *Agrippina* was not entirely new, some ideas were borrowed from other composers and some were self-borrowed, adapted and developed from earlier Italian works such as *La Resurrezione* and chamber cantatas written in Florence and Rome. There are also a few musical quotes from *Rodrigo*. Few people

in Venice would have heard this music before and as a whole, *Agrippina* shows an assured mastery of the Italian idiom, and musically it reflects character and dramatic context more than in *Rodrigo*. This overture, therefore, sets the scene splendidly for this second album of music from Handel's Italy.

***Sicut Sagittae in manu potentis from
Nisi Dominus
Rome (1707), HWV 238***

Soon after Handel completed his setting of Psalm 109, *Dixit Dominus* (HWV 232) in Rome, he produced two stylistically similar psalm compositions: *Laudate Pueri Dominum* in D major (HWV 237) and a double choir setting of *Nisi Dominus* (HWV 238). The autograph was probably destroyed in a fire but the auction catalogue shows Handel's signature and it is dated the 13th July, 1707. Both psalm settings were probably intended for the annual feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel solemnly celebrated on the 16th July 1707 in the Carmelite church of Santa Maria in Montesanto, located on the Piazza del Popolo.

Nisi Dominus is a large-scale setting of the Latin text for the Catholic Psalm 127 (Vulgate

126) and it is thought to have been Cardinal Carlo Colonna, one of Handel's earliest patrons, who commissioned this vesper psalm. Cardinal Colonna was the patron of this Marian Festival and had financed the music for a while as he held traditional family ties with the Carmelites.

Handel's writing was particularly prolific during the first part of 1707 and he made huge advances in his compositional style and choral writing especially for Latin sacred music. A survey of his compositions at this time highlights a formative period as Handel masters the melodic Italian manner. His style becomes more fluent and melody-driven than previously in Germany and he had become a fully armed and accomplished composer of concert music for choir and orchestra, despite not yet having had the chance to hear English church music. His music contains traces of more supple, polished and energetic string writing and influences of Corelli as well as the flexibility, eloquence and vocal finesse of Alessandro Scarlatti.

As Handel was a Lutheran and wrote for the Catholic Church, his works naturally reflected the views of others such as his patrons and



Canaletto, Venice 1709.

librettists. *Nisi Dominus* is based on Roman ideals and is baroque in form and idiom. It has a sequence of *coups-de-theatre* and poetical lines of text and word painting. In *Sicut Sagittae*, arrows are depicted by scalic flourishes with the strong bass voice depicting the mighty one, 'As arrows in the hands of the mighty: thus are the children of outcasts'.

In the concluding doxology, Handel writes for eight voices ending antiphonally in a double chorus (*concertato and ripieno*) and (uniquely in his output) a double string orchestra scored for strings and continuo. This work also includes ideas later revisited and developed in his English works such as *Zadok the Priest*.

***Tu del Ciel ministro eletto* from
Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno
Rome (1707), HWV 46a**

Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno composed in the spring 1707 was Handel's very first allegorical oratorio and uses extended Italian text set to a libretto by Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili with a title that translates as "*The Triumph of Time and Disillusionment*". This musically adventurous work is related to the Italian tradition of moral cantatas and *Il Trionfo*, a set of poems by Francesco Petrarca was still circulating in 18th century Roman literary circles.

It was premiered that summer in Rome by virtuosi musicians and singers but without acting, due to the Papal ban on operas caused by a previous scandal at the Carnival. Handel sometimes had difficulties working with his singers, but during rehearsals for *Il Trionfo* in Rome he apparently struggled with the violinist Arcangelo Corelli, the celebrated leader of his orchestra and Ottoboni's house band. According to Mainwaring, Corelli told Handel he could not play the introduction or overture as it was written in the French style which he did not understand. Corelli does have French touches

in his own music, so he would have actually known what Handel was doing, but despite this, Handel apparently seized Corelli's violin and played these spirited passages as he thought they should be performed. As Corelli was one of the most influential composers of the time and also a virtuoso player, his musical impact was huge. Handel was deeply sensitive to his performers when writing instrumental Italian works and here he took the Corellian style on board and penned a replacement overture.

Handel returned to this work 30 years later in England with a revised and expanded three-section version *Il Trionfo del tempo e della verità* (HWV 46b) marking a centre point in his career. Completing the cycle and linking the beginning of his career to the end, he made a final revision of his very last oratorio (in English) when he was blind and in extremely poor health during 1757 (HWV 71) *The Triumph of Time and Truth*.

In the libretto, Bellezza (Beauty) is tempted to become a disciple of Piacere (Pleasure) but eventually takes heed of the compassionate warnings of Tempo (Time) and Disinganno (Disillusionment) that it is better to avoid sin

and instead dedicate oneself to virtue and godliness. Piacere entrances Bellezza with music and art which would have put Handel in a tricky position as his own music was included as a luxury to be relinquished in order to gain spiritual salvation. Handel cleverly solves this by ending the oratorio with this heart wrenching, wafting and beautiful aria, *Tu del Ciel ministro eletto (O thou, chosen minister of heaven)* inviting the listener to head for a higher plane rather than have it rejected for being a mere luxurious and brilliant show off movement. This is Bellezza's final lamentation of reformation when she chooses a righteous path and is pleading with the angels for repentance, resembling qualities of the image of Mary Magdalene. Her angelic guide is depicted by an ethereal solo violin part, presumably played by Corelli, floating above softly treading chords in the orchestral strings creating a heavenly end to this masterpiece.

**Cantatas: *Poichè giuraro amore*
and *Dalla guerra amorosa*
HWV 148 and HWV 102a**

The cantata form was the most important and ubiquitous vocal music of the Baroque era outside of opera and oratorio. Inspired by the

music of Alessandro Scarlatti, the greatest and most prolific exponent of this genre, Handel's Italian cantatas were almost continuously in production throughout his travels in that country.

Curiously Handel never published any of his cantatas, unlike his other genres, although cantatas by other composers were being published and the large amount of borrowings from them suggest Handel valued the cantata form highly. Perhaps this was due to the more personal nature of patronage and the private or secular performance of the cantatas as covert political and social messages and references to patrons and other figures are rife throughout the cantata texts. Furthermore Handel's cantatas are neatly contained in the period 1706 - 1723 when he lived and worked in the houses of Aristocratic patrons. Before 1706 he lived in Germany and in 1723 he moved into his own house on Brook Street, in London. The two continuo cantatas contained in this recording are fine examples of his self-contained, independent mini-dramas in which characters and emotions are vividly brought to life.

***Poichè giuraro Amore* (HWV 148)** is the premiere recording of this solo cantata for soprano and continuo with a standard

structure: two recitatives and two da capo arias beginning and ending in G minor. It originates from Ruspoli's household copied 16th May 1707 (Rome) and again in 1709. Ruspoli himself did not write poetry so one of his house poets, houseguests or fellow Arcadians possibly wrote the text. Nearly half of Handel's cantatas were composed for Ruspoli for whom Handel served between 1707 – 1709, whilst others were written for Roman patrons including Benedetto Pamphilli and Pietro Ottoboni.

The majority of Handel's cantatas were written for solo voice and continuo (unlike a lot of his contemporaries) with soprano being the most popular. These cantatas offered Handel a preliminary stage and way to learn to write for the female voice pertaining to the complexity of psychology and emotions associated with his characters, who often included the various Cloris, Amarilis, Fillis, Armidas, Lidias, Licoris and Dianas. These female roles were later developed in his operas often speaking with impassioned voices and a feminine viewpoint.

The cantatas most often were based on pastoral poetry and mythological stories reflecting the Arcadians. *Poichè giuraro Amore* is typical in its depiction of an unrequited lover in an idyllic pastoral setting and the imagery of wind, rocks and hard stones abounds. The opening sorrowful recitative speaks of a sad heart caused by the unfaithful Clori and sets the scene depicting the harsh cruelty of treacherous love and resulting heartache. The first lyrical aria suggests perhaps one day fate will change and Clori will become stronger and be released from this fury of time and death.

The second recitative brings us back to the suffering and loneliness of the weary heart caused by infidelity leading to a more active final aria which begins with the madrigalian use of a rest linked to a form of word painting. This dramatic silence depicts the catching of a breath or a sigh as an act of respiration as indicated in *Basterebbe a tor di vita mille cori, il duol ch'io sento* which paints the powerful phrase 'it would suffice to take from life a thousand hearts'. The more active nature of this aria which contains dotted movement in the bass line displays a strength of character *Né sì fiero aspro tormento al mio cor*

morte non dà ('such fierce and bitter torment does not cause my heart to die') before its final conclusion in G minor. This is rounded off with strength after such bitter torment as neither Handel nor his anonymous librettist would have wanted to send the Roman public home with complete melancholic thoughts of *memento mori*.

Dalla guerra amorosa, (HWV 102a) is a dramatic secular continuo cantata which was very popular in Handel's day. This version of the cantata for bass voice is in its original form although it is not clear who sang this work in Rome or when it was composed exactly. Despite initial evidence suggesting 1709, it was also feasible that it was composed the previous year for the bass singer Cristofano who had been employed by the Marquis Francesco Ruspoli for the role of Lucifer in *La Resurrezione* for the Easter of 1708. It was later included in a collection of Roman cantatas in Hanover; the newly appointed court music director of the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg apparently gave this cantata to the same bass singer who also undertook the role of the God of the Muses in his large-scale cantata *Apollo e Dafne*.

The theme of this cantata employs the familiar metaphor of fleeing from the war of love, which formerly inspired Monteverdi in several madrigals. This poignant cantata depicts a lover coming to the realization that it is better to flee from the war of love than to be defeated by the revengeful Amor, as the God of love armed with his arrows lurks behind every pair of bewitching beautiful black eyes.

The first aria depicts the treacherous effect of the '*occhio nero*' (black eyes) in a disarming and fiery melody which Handel brought with him from Hamburg to Italy, based on the chorus from his Hamburg opera *Die verwandelte Daphne*. In both cases, this charming melody warns of the intrigues of the god of love. After a second recitative urging one to flee from treacherous love, *La bellezza è come un fiore* descends to gloomy minor regions and its impassioned melody suffused with chromatic steps depicts the transience of all that is beautiful on earth through the image of the wilting flower.

An extra section is added in at the end which concludes this cantata in F major, the dominant from the opening in B flat major. This rhythmically powerful *arioso* has a

more urgent and active tone as the dramatic cry of the soloist advises one to fly away from the war of love, because whoever serves Amor will always be captured by love and remain his prisoner and therefore endure a joyless and painful life.

Keyboard Works: Sonata (Larghetto) in G minor and Concerto (Allegro) and Andante in G major HWV 580 and HWV 487

According to the linen and silk-merchant from Hanau, Denis Nohac, (*Voyage Historique et politique de Suisse, d'Italie et d'Allemagne 1737*) Handel was already well acquainted with musicians of great reputation in Rome even early on in 1707.

Nohac was invited to hear Handel play the harpsichord and suggested that many Italians, especially Romans had 'strange ideas about the power of the Devil and musicians' and were deeply suspicious that Handel's highly powered musical skills were somehow linked to the hat that he was holding rather awkwardly under his arm. Rather bemused, Nohac continues 'Handel was a Saxon, and therefore a Lutheran, that made them suspect that his skill was supernatural. I even

heard some saying that holding on to his hat had something to do with it.' (Translations Professor Donald Burrows). At the advice of Nohac, Handel released his hat and played even better than before just to dispel this rumour.

Handel's mastery of the organ also brought him attention in Rome and Nohac gave an account of Handel's organ playing in the basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano. A contemporary diarist Francesco Valesio wrote on 14 January 1707 that 'There is lately arrived in this city a Saxon who is a most excellent player upon the harpsichord and composer of music and who today made great pomp of his virtue in playing upon the organ in the church of San Giovanni to the amazement of all'. Reputed to be the largest and most magnificent organ in Rome this instrument still survives to this day.

Mainwaring's anecdotes relate that Handel and Scarlatti entered a musical contest with each other at the palace of Cardinal Ottoboni in Rome and who himself was an exquisite harpsichord player. Despite a common consensus that they shared the victor's palms on the harpsichord, Scarlatti generously acknowledged the Saxon's superiority on the organ and

was so struck by Handel's method of playing that he followed him throughout Italy.

It is not known what music Handel performed on any of these historic occasions. No body of organ music by Handel - apart from the concertos composed later in England - survives in a recognizable form. If a competition with Scarlatti took place, it is possible that pieces were improvised and that Handel constructed those improvisations based upon his own compositions using themes from sinfonias, overtures, arias or indeed themes from other composers rather than performing bespoke keyboard works.

The *Sonata in G minor* displays features of the Italian style and possibly originated as a violin solo with accompaniment. The beautiful opening theme appears in modified forms in the *Violin Concerto*, *Sonata a 5* in B flat (HWV 288) and in *I will magnify thee*, Chandos Anthem Number 5 (HWV 250c). It appears in a source preceding the *Concerto in G major* which is the following piece on this recording, so they may well be played together.

The *Concerto* itself may be an original keyboard composition and is often linked to his Italian period through stylistic evidence, although little is known about the circumstances of its composition. The title *Concerto* and the oboe-like passages, perhaps suggests that this work is an arrangement of an orchestral piece, or an early working using the style of a concerto. It has *piano* and *forte* markings which may reflect the concerto style or the use of the upper and lower manual of a double manual harpsichord like in the piece *Sonata for a harpsichord with Double Keys in G major* (HWV 579) (See **Handel in Italy Vol.1 Signum Records**). Several copies omit the inner part of the right hand as 18th century copyists often did when transcribing orchestral works for keyboard. A reworking of this material occurs in the *Sinfonia* in Act III of *Scipione* (HWV 20). The 2nd movement, the *Andante*, is the same as the second movement of the *Concerto Grosso* Op 3 no 4 (HWV 315) and only occasionally has inner parts in the right hand and was reworked for the famous Braamcamp Handel- Clay clock.

***Precipitoso nel mar che freme from Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* Naples (1708), HWV 72**

In 1708 Handel travelled to Naples, one of Europe's grand metropolises, both politically and culturally, where he was looked after well and received invitations to meet several distinguished members of society. It was here he wrote *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* (HWV 72) a dramatic cantata or large scale serenata which was first performed on the 19th July 1708; the completed score is dated to 16 June 1708.

This serenata was possibly commissioned by the highly cultured Duchess Donna Aurora Sanseverino and was likely composed for the wedding festivities of her niece, Beatrice Tocco di Montemiletto, Princess of Acaja and in marriage to the Duke of Alvito, Tolomeo Saverio Gallo in 1708. The Italian libretto was written by Nicola Giuvo, the private secretary and literary adviser of Duchess Sanseverino and is based on Book XIII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* which is a mythological work that replicates a typical pastoral scenario and the settings show humans and Gods both at the mercy of cruel and arbitrary forces.

The synopsis tells the tale of a tragic love story between the shepherd Aci and nymph Galatea. The monstrous one eyed cyclops, Polifemo woos Galatea but she remains faithful to her lover, Aci. Even after Polifemo's jealous actions lead him to killing Aci, he still persistently continues his pursuit of Galatea who calls upon her father a water God, to turn Aci into a stream so that he will flow into Neptune's ocean where she will finally plunge in to meet him.

Although the ending of this serenata is not a happy one, as Aci and Galatea were never married and Aci is murdered, it is based on transformation as it delivers a final moral explanation of hope and that the constancy of those who have known true love will never change. So despite this being an odd choice of a wedding gift from the Duchess to the Duke of Alvito and later on, to her own son, (both bridegrooms of whom died tragically early), perhaps the message of constancy in love and hope was intended or the Christian message that although the body dies, the soul is transformed (represented by the transformation of Aci and Galatea after death into the ocean).

This mythological story gave Handel the opportunity to portray a rich spectrum of emotions ranging from idyllic to comical which demanded a greater sense of drama to depict more action. On the basis of the three title roles, Handel developed a dramatic context full of musical inventiveness as it was fresh and modern and which led to an operatic setting of the libretto. Ten years later in 1718, Handel created an English-language exquisite pastoral opera *Acis and Galatea*, (See **Handel at Vauxhall Vol.1 Signum Records**). Although the plot is virtually the same, Handel drew little on the original music of this serenata when he returned to the storyline and made later adaptations. Earlier settings of this popular story had been made by Lully, Eccles and Bononcini and Handel's own version of *Acis and Galatea* was later arranged by W.A. Mozart. The bass da capo aria, *Precipitoso nel mar che freme* depicts Polifemo's rage, size and strength and is a musical version of monstrosity depicted by Ovid. The more focused he is, the faster he gets and if he is stopped he will become even more enraged. The role of Polifemo, was particularly notable for the vast range and singular vocal agility required.

Italian Trios: *Quel fior che all'alba ride* and *Se tu non lasci amore*

HWV 200 and HWV 201a

Whilst in Italy, one of the most important features of this period was the refining of Handel's vocal style. Handel wrote seven chamber duets and two trios whilst there, possibly after the influence from his predecessor in Hanover, Agostino Steffani, who had established the chamber duet as a genre as well as Giovanni Maria Clari and Pietro Torri. In Italy during the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, the chamber duet was a favourite form of vocal music alongside the solo cantata and was often used for compositional experimentation, innovation and for study and teaching purposes. They were performed at social occasions for smaller circles of connoisseurs and enthusiasts of the prosperous bourgeoisie and aristocracy.

Although *Se tu non lasci amore* is dated July 12, 1708 Naples, which locates it very close to the serenata, *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*, these trios or solely *Quel fior che all'alba ride*, may well be assumed to belong to the circles of the Roman Arcadia and later revised for Handel's visit to Naples. They are

both written for two high voices and bass with continuo only without obbligato instruments. Influenced by the monody of the stile nuova and the polyphonic madrigal, they do not use the da capo form but rather are through-composed to convey closely the nature and expression of their texts in open-ended sequences. Within Handel's oeuvre, these trios are particularly fascinating as they mix his native style with newly acquired skills together in some of his most sensual writing. All three voices sing the same Italian text as one persona rather than as individual characters, with very skillful counterpoint from Handel's native Germany, interweaving beautifully with a new style of expression which transforms throughout and shows off the final flowering and heights of this style of writing. Within a controlled framework, the phrases exude pure pleasure from the consonant and dissonant juxtapositions of the intertwining voices, the vivid mix of sound colours and vocal registers and by the exquisite harmonies revealing sophisticated chromatic effects.

The lively opening phrase of *Quel fior che all'alba ride*, sung by the first soprano, is followed by completely different themes from

the other voices rather than being treated and imitated successively as a fugal subject. The second soprano enters with a descending scale in crotchet values closely followed by a new brisk and rhythmic figure based on a quaver and two semiquaver groups in the bass. These three sequences are then skilfully used in ever-changing combinations demonstrating an extraordinary mastery of writing on the part of Handel, whilst at the same time absorbing the tri-dimensional and sensual expression of the vocal line. The framework of the counterpoint allows the same images to be represented with ever different nuances, colours and textures ending up in the relative minor key of D minor. The musical discourse created here encompasses light and shade, joy as well as omens of death advancing the same reminder of the transience of nature conveyed in the text that in the dawn the sunset is already present, in spring and in birth, death is already around the corner.

As another work of skilfully crafted polyphonic elaboration, *Se tu non lasci amore* also displays an outstanding quality on account of its sublime opening section. Like the other trio, it comprises of three sections alternating between common and triple time ending up

in different key to the one it set out with. After much chromaticism, a short homophonic section, solo entries and more intricate polyphonic writing in this earlier version, it is led away from G minor to its final conclusion in C minor. The chromatic tensions and abrupt manner of the leaps are a reminder of the great Neapolitan tradition inherited from Gesualdo and reflect the sharp warnings of being in love.

During Handel's time in Italy, he experimented rapidly with his compositional style as he looked back at Renaissance Italy, possibly to understand and successfully master the style of writing. At the same time these trios are fore-bearers of the oratorio choruses which he wrote later on, especially in the 1740s after the demise of Italian opera. Interestingly, at this same point in time later on in London, Handel renewed his interest in duets and trios and uses some of the same techniques of vocal composition and expression in his new style to write more accomplished oratorio choruses.

All the more astonishing is that like the artist Sir Peter Paul Rubens a century beforehand, Handel was very young when he arrived in

Italy from the North of Europe, both artists being in their early twenties. The Italian countryside, towns, architecture, literature, paintings and the people exerted an influence on them both providing a harmonious agreement of texture, colour and vision. Handel spent three and a half years in Italy composing with a unique creative intensity which provided him with a bank of compositions that he could then draw upon for many future occasions. This visit deeply influenced and affected his legacy of experiences which became fundamental and formative to his lifetime of compositions and his everlasting place in our affections and history as one of the world's favourite composers - a man of extraordinary genius.

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TEXTS

2 Nisi Dominus, HWV 238

Sicut sagittae in manu potentis:
ita filii excussorum.

*As arrows in the hands of the mighty:
thus are the children of outcasts*

3 - 4 Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno, HWV 46a

3 Pure del Cielo intelligenze eterne,
Che vera scuola a ben amare aprite,
Udite, angeli, udite il pianto mio,
E se la Verità dal Sole eterno
Tragge luce immortale, e a me lo scopre,
Fate che al gran desio rispondan l'opre.

*Pure and immortal beings of heaven
Who reveal true teachings of pure love,
Hear me, you angels, hear my lamentation,
And even as Truth, from the eternal Sun
Draws immortal light, revealing it to me,
Let my deeds respond to my great desire.*

4 Tu del Ciel ministro eletto,
Non vedrai più nel mio petto
Voglia infida, o vano ardor.
E se vissi ingrata a Dio,
Tu custode del cor mio
A lui porta il nuovo cor.

*You, high minister of Heaven,
Shall see no more in my heart
A treacherous wish or empty craving.
And though I lived unmindful of God,
May you, as guardian of my heart,
Bring to Him a new heart.*

5 - 8 Poiché giuraro amore, HWV 148

5 Poiché giuraro amore
E Clori infida,
Di farmi eterna guerra,

*Since Love,
And unfaithful Clori,
Swore to make such eternal war on me,*

Tale, e tanta si serra,
 Intorno al mesto core,
 Densa importuna nebbia di dolore
 Che dissipa e disperde
 D'ogni mia speme il verde,
 D'alte, confuse, dolorose strida
 Fo risuonar la più repostata selva,
 Sì che ne teme e fugge
 Ogni augello, ogni belva;
 Ed io, smarrito e solo,
 All'aure, a' tronchi, a' sassi
 Così narro piangendo il mio gran duolo.

[6] Figli di rupe alpestra,
 Duri sassi,
 Cangerassi,
 Forse un dì la vostra sorte.
 Vi darà mano maestra,
 Forza spirito e valore
 Ch'al furore
 Vi torranno del tempo e della morte.

[7] Io senza speme di cangiar mai tempre
 Nel mio dolor sarò l'istesso sempre.
 Sol nel mesto mio cuore
 Col tempo il duol diverrà maggiore.
 Ahi, che a sì dura sorte
 Non può sottrarmi altro che morte.
 Ahi che a miei danni intenta,

*So much that tightened
 Around my sad heart is
 A thick, festering fog of pain
 That fragments and disperses
 The beginning of my every hope,
 I make high, confused, sad cries
 That resound in the most remote forest,
 So that in fear flees
 Every bird, every beast;
 And I, lost, and alone,
 To the winds, the trees and rocks,
 Thus, weeping, narrate my great sorrow.*

*Offspring of the rugged cliff,
 Hard stones,
 Your fate will change
 Perhaps one day.
 A divine hand will give you
 Strength, spirit and valour,
 That will release you from
 The fury of time and death.*

*I, without hope of ever changing the nature
 Of my sadness, will always be the same,
 Alone in the sadness of my heart.
 With time the sadness will only become greater.
 Ah, from such a hard fate
 Nothing but death can save me.
 Ah, but intent on my suffering,*

Per me solo la morte, è pigra e lenta.

[8] Basterebbe a tor di vita
 Mille cori il duol ch'io sento
 Né sì fiero aspro tormento
 Al mio cor morte non dà.
 Che la morte, in lega unita
 Co' nemici del mio cuore,
 Vuol di Clori, vuol d'amore
 Adular la crudeltà.

[12] - [16] **Dalla guerra amorosa**, HWV 102a

[12] Dalla guerra amorosa,
 Or che ragion mi chiama,
 O miei pensieri,
 Fuggite pur, fuggite,
 Vergognosa non è
 In amor la fuga,
 Che sol fuggendo un'alma
 Del crudo amor può riporta la palma.

[13] Non v'alletti un occhio nero,
 Con suoi sguardi lusinghiero,
 Che da voi chieda pietà.
 Che per far le sue vendette,
 E con arco e con saette,
 Ivi amor nascoso sta.

Death, for me alone, is lazy and slow.

*The sorrow that I feel
 Would suffice to take from life a thousand hearts.
 Such fierce, bitter torment,
 Does not give death to my heart.
 For death, in league united
 With the enemies of my heart,
 Wants to emulate
 The cruelty of Clori and of Love.*

*From the war of love,
 Now that reason calls me,
 O my thoughts,
 Fly indeed, fly,
 Flight is not inglorious
 In love,
 For only by fleeing
 Is a soul able to win the palm (of victory) from
 cruel love.*

*Do not be charmed by any dark eye(s)
 Alluring with their glances,
 That may beg pity from you.
 For in order to take revenge,
 With both bow and arrow,
 Love stands hidden there.*

[14] Fuggite, sì fuggite!
Ahi! di quanto veleno,
Amore asperge i suoi piaceri,
Ah! quanto ministra duol, e pianto,
A chi lo segue e le sue leggi adora.
Se un volto v'innamora,
Sappiate, O pensieri miei,
Che ciò che piace
In brev'ora svanisce, e poi dispiace.

[15] La bellezza è com'un fiore,
Sul matin vivace e bello,
Sul matin di primavera.
Che la sera langue e more,
Si scolora e non par quello.

[16] Fuggite, sì fuggite!
A chi servo d'amor vive in catena,
È dubbioso il gioir, certa la pena.

[17] **Aci, Galatea e Polifemo**, HWV 72

Precipitoso
Nel mar che fremente
Più corre il fiume
Che stretto fu.
Ho per costume
Privo di speme
Anch'io sdegnoso
Rendermi più.

Fly, yes, fly!
Ah! how much poison
Love sprinkles over his pleasures,
Ah! how much sadness and crying he gives
The one who follows him and worships his laws.
If a (beautiful) face makes you fall in love,
Know, O my thoughts
That which pleases
In a short while vanishes, and then brings sorrow.

Beauty is like a flower,
In the morning lively and lovely,
In the morning of springtime.
Which in the evening languishes and dies,
It fades and no longer seems what it was.

Fly, yes fly!
To one who, a servant of love, lives in chains,
Joy is doubtful, pain is certain.

Hastily
to the stormy sea
the river runs faster
the closer it is.
And it is my nature
that without hope
I too become
more enraged

[18] - [19] **Quel fior che all' alba ride**, HWV 200

[18] Quel fior che all'alba ride
Il sole poi l'uccide
E tomba ha bella sera.

[19] È un fior la vita ancora:
L'ocaso ha nell'aurora
E perde in un sol dì la primavera.

[20] - [21] **Se tu non lasci amore**, HWV 201a

[20] Se tu non lasci amore,
Mio cor, ti pentirai, lo ben io.
Lontano dal tuo bene
Tu non avrai che pene.

[21] Ma con chi parlo, oh Dio!
Quando non ho più core,
O il core che pur ho non è più mio?

The flower that smiles at dawn
is then killed by the sun
and is buried by the evening.

Life is like a flower:
Its setting is already in its dawn,
and it loses its springtime in a single day.

If you do not abandon love,
o my heart, I know well that you will regret it.
Far from your beloved
You shalt have only pain.

But who am I talking to, oh God!
when I no longer have a heart,
or the heart I still have is no longer mine?

Translations © Bridget Cunningham 2016

BENJAMIN BEVAN

Benjamin Bevan won a scholarship to study at the Guildhall School, London and made his international début at Lausanne Opera in *La Cenerentola*.

He made his UK operatic début at Scottish Opera as Marcello in *La Bohème* followed by return invitations to sing Fleville and Fouquier-Tinville in *Andrea Chenier* under Sir Richard Armstrong and Riccardo I Puritani, *Lescaut* in Massenet's *Manon* and Marcello in the revival of *La Bohème* under Francesco Corti. He made his debut at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden singing Henry Cuffe in *Gloriana* by Benjamin Britten and made his debut at Welsh National Opera in two new productions: singing *Lescaut* in *Boulevard Solitude* by Henze followed by Roderick Usher in *Usher House* by Getty.

Other operatic highlights include *Lescaut* for the Royal Danish Opera, *Ferryman* *Curlew River* for Opéra de Dijon, and *Count Almaviva* *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Longborough Opera.

On the concert platform Benjamin's highlights include performances of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Bach Collegium Japan under Masaaki



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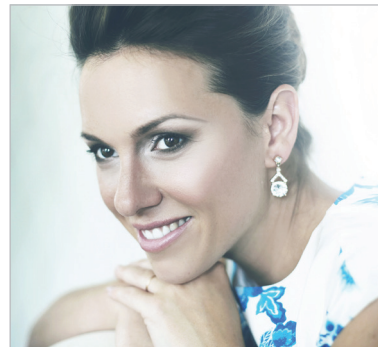
Suzuki and with the Royal Northern Sinfonia under Paul McCreesh, Bach's *St John Passion* with the Hanover Band, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra under John Butt, Bach's *B Minor Mass* at The Three Choirs' Festival, and Handel's *Messiah* with the English Concert under Harry Bicket, as well as with the Wrocław Baroque Orchestra under Christian Curnyn as part of the Göttingen International Handel Festival, and on tour with Bach Collegium Japan and Suzuki.

Benjamin features on *Handel in Italy Vol.1* and *Handel at Vauxhall Vol.1*, also available on Signum Classics.

MARY BEVAN

Mary Bevan is one of Britain's top emerging artists, receiving acclaim from critics and audiences for her stand out performances. She is currently a Harewood Artist at ENO and an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music. In 2014 she was awarded the UK Critics' Circle Award for Exceptional Young Talent in music. Recent operatic engagements include the title role in *Rossi Orpheus* for the Royal Opera at Shakespeare's Globe; *Yum-Yum* *The Mikado*, *Susanna* *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Rebecca* in *Nico Muhly's Two Boys*, all for English National Opera; *Elvira* in *Rossini L'italiana in Algeri* at Garsington Opera, *Music & Euridice* in *Monteverdi L'Orfeo* with ROH at the Roundhouse, *Barbarina* *Le nozze di Figaro* at the ROH, and David Bruce's *The Firework Maker's Daughter* with The Opera Group, Opera North and ROH2.

In concert Mary recently performed *Silandra* in *Cesti Orontea* with La Nuova Musica, Bach cantatas with the Dunedin Consort, baroque programmes with the Academy of Ancient Music and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and Faure *Requiem* with Orquestra Sinfonica de Sevilla and Philharmonia. She has previously sung *Mozart Requiem* with the English Chamber



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Orchestra, Maxwell Davies *Caroline Mathilde Suite* at the BBC Proms, Mendelssohn *Symphony No.2* with the CBSO, Stravinsky *Pulcinella* with the Prague Philharmonia and Handel *Messiah* with the English Concert. A dedicated recitalist, she has appeared at the Oxford Lieder Festival and Wigmore Hall.

Mary's recordings include *Handel in Italy Vol 1* for Signum Classics, Ludwig Thuille and Mendelssohn songs for Champs Hill Records, *Handel The Triumph of Time and Truth* with Ludus Baroque, *Vaughan Williams Symphony No.3* and *Schubert Rosamunde* with the BBC Philharmonic, and *Hadley Fen and Flood* with the Bournemouth Symphony.

SOPHIE BEVAN

Sophie Bevan studied at the Benjamin Britten International Opera School where she received the Queen Mother Rose Bowl Award.

Sophie has appeared at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, English and Welsh National Opera and Frankfurt Opera where her operatic roles have included Polissena Radamisto, Telair Castor and Pollux, the title role The Cunning Little Vixen, Ninetta La gazza ladra, Waldvogel Siegfried, Ilia Idomeneo, Sophie Der Rosenkavalier, Pamina Die Zauberflöte and Susanna Le nozze di Figaro. She made her Glyndebourne Festival debut as Michal Saul and her debut at the Teatro Real, Madrid as Pamina.

The conductors she has worked with include Gardner, Cummings, Harding, Elder, Nelsons and Pappano with orchestras that include the Hallé Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, The Sixteen, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Swedish Radio, and the City of Birmingham. She made her United States debut with the Handel & Haydn Society and has appeared at the BBC Proms and the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh and Tanglewood festivals. She has given recitals at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw with



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Malcolm Martineau and made her Wigmore Hall recital debut with Sebastian Wybrew to critical acclaim.

Sophie was the recipient of the 2010 Critics' Circle award for Exceptional Young Talent, The Times Breakthrough Award at the 2012 South Bank Sky Arts Awards and the Young Singer award at the 2013 inaugural International Opera Awards.

"Gloria ... dazzlingly sung by Sophie Bevan"
The Guardian, 2015 (Handel in Italy Vol.1, Signum Classics)

MUSICAL HERITAGE OF THE BEVAN FAMILY

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Baritone, composer and editor Maurice Bevan was a founder member of The Deller Consort, the vocal ensemble that heralded the renaissance of English Baroque and pre-Baroque music. His brother, Roger Bevan, converted to Rome and married the daughter of an Opera singer Frank Baldock who was in Beecham's Opera Company, The Royal Opera and also sang at Westminster Cathedral under Sir Richard Terry. Like Terry, Roger became choirmaster at Downside School in Somerset and was the founder of the Bevan family choir, which toured widely and recorded with many of his 14 children between the 1950s and 1970s.

One of Roger's daughters Rachel Bevan was a founder member of The English Concert and was a soprano with most of the major vocal ensembles from The William Byrd Choir to The

Sixteen. Her brother is the organist and composer and long serving Director of Music at the Church of Our Most Holy Redeemer and St Thomas More, Chelsea: David Bevan. He is the father to the award winning sopranos Sophie and Mary Bevan and brother to the internationally acclaimed baritone Benjamin Bevan, married to soprano Juliet Schiemann. Many of the Bevan family are musical continuing on this phenomenal musical legacy including the three young tenors Edward, Harry and Dominic who are in training at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music, London

BRIDGET CUNNINGHAM

Bridget Cunningham is an international opera conductor, prizewinning harpsichordist, presenter and musicologist who trained at the Royal College of Music, London.

Bridget conducts and performs regularly at venues and festivals throughout Europe including St Martin-in The Fields, London, Festi Classique, France and Innsbruck Festival, Austria. She has conducted several operas, oratorios and works such as Purcell's Fairy Queen, Mozart's Magic Flute, Handel's Semele and Vivaldi's Gloria for orchestras including

London Early Opera, Music of the Spheres Ensemble and the Schola Pietatis Antonio Vivaldi. She has a wide musical background as well as Early Music from performing Piazzolla with the RTE Irish Chamber Orchestra live on Lyric Radio, to conducting recordings of early 20th Century English music composed by George Butterworth.

As a solo harpsichordist, Bridget has broadcast on Austria's National Radio Stephansdom and was invited to perform for Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace. She regularly gives lecture recitals and concerts at Art Galleries and opened; 'Watteau: The Drawings Exhibition' at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. She has performed and presented on several Radio and TV programmes for BBC, SkyArts, RTE, Radio Stephansdom and Radio France including *Front Row* BBC Radio 4, *In Tune* and *The King James Bible* BBC Radio 3 and for TV, *Messiah* BBC2, *Vivaldi's Women* BBC4 and has filmed for the Handel Hendrix House, Brook Street London.

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Handel in Ireland, Vol. 1

Bridget Cunningham *solo harpsichord*

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Producers – Christopher Alder and Mark Brown
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415 Hz pitch – due to the differing low Roman pitch and the high Venetian pitch used in Italy in the 18th century.

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