



EXPERIENCE
LIVING MUSIC



A BAROQUE CHRISTMAS

December 20 + 22, 2020

HANDEL+HAYDN SOCIETY

A BAROQUE CHRISTMAS

December 20 + 22, 2020 at 3:00PM
St. Cecilia Parish, Boston

2,524th Concert
Streamed Online

PERFORMERS

Emily Marvosh, *host*
Ian Watson, *director and keyboards*

H+H Orchestra

PROGRAM

Prelude: Veni, veni Emmanuel

Sinfonia in D Major, Op. 6, No. 12

Allegro
Grave
Allegro ma non troppo

Evaristo Felice Dall'Abaco
(1675–1742)

“A la venue de Noël” from *Noëls pour instruments*

Marc-Antoine Charpentier
(1643–1704)

Mystery Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, *Nativity*

Sonata
Courante
Double
Adagio

Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber
(1644?–1704)

Aisslinn Nosky, *violin*

“Laissez paître vos bêtes” from *Noëls pour instruments*

Charpentier

Concerto grosso in G Minor, Op. 8, No. 6, *Christmas Concerto*

Grave
Vivace
Largo
Vivace

Giuseppe Torelli
(1658–1709)

Aisslinn Nosky and Christina Day Martinson, *violin concertino*
Guy Fishman, *cello concertino*

Sinfonia spirituosu, TWV44:1

Spirituoso
Largo
Vivace

Georg Philipp Telemann
(1681–1767)

Postlude: Veni, veni Emmanuel

This program is made possible in part by the
generous support of Nancy and Michael Tooke.

PROGRAM NOTES A CHRISTMAS JOURNEY

So many aspects of our lives today feel distant and unfamiliar even while other parts of daily life gain new meaning. The works on today's concert invite us to immerse ourselves in the sounds of the Baroque and the season, establishing new connections with the music and one another. This Christmas journey will take us throughout Europe and across hundreds of years. It begins with a hymn.

The popularity of “Veni, veni Emmanuel” in the early 20th century sparked questions about its origins. One of the most popular theories centered around Thomas Helmore, a 19th-century British teacher and musician who established a tradition of unaccompanied singing for daily services at St. Mark's College, Chelsea. His publications of chant melodies, which he believed were suited for congregational singing, led many to assume that Helmore was responsible for “Veni, veni Emmanuel,” even though Helmore himself denied writing this hymn. He credited it to his colleague John M. Neale, who, he said, copied it from a French *missal*. Neale, who collected music during his extensive travels, translated the texts for Helmore's chant publications; Helmore and Neale also published two collections of carols.

The text of “Veni, veni Emmanuel” synthesizes what are called the “O Antiphons” —sometimes called the “Great” Antiphons — a group of texts dating to the 8th or 9th century, all beginning with the word “O” and sung on the days leading up to Christmas Eve. The melody has been dated to the 15th century; it was identified (500 years later) by Dr. Mary Berry (Sr. Thomas More) as a processional for Franciscan nuns in France.

Dall'Abaco, Sinfonia in D Major, Op. 6, No. 12

Evaristo Felice Dall'Abaco was born in Verona, Italy in 1675. At the age of 22 Dall'Abaco went to Modena, where he was a freelance violinist and not associated with one particular court. He stayed there until 1701. What he did or where he lived for the next three years is not known, but in 1704 he was listed as a cellist for the court of Maximilian II Emmanuel in Munich. From this point forward, Dall'Abaco's fortunes followed that of the Bavarian elector: he fled with the court to the Netherlands and France as a result of the War of Spanish Succession and returned to Bavaria in 1715 with a triumphant Maximilian, who appointed Dall'Abaco the concert master of the orchestra. The composer's loyalty was rewarded further when Dall'Abaco was named an electoral counselor. But Dall'Abaco's role at court was gradually diminished by the next elector who found his music somewhat outdated. Tastes have changed and today we can delight in his works such as the Sinfonia in D major, op. 6, no. 12. One of his last publications, this Sinfonia opens with a sparkling Allegro. The more jagged rhythmic patterns of the Grave section set it apart from the outer movements; however, the last chord of the Grave demands a satisfying harmonic conclusion, which is provided by the downbeat of the next movement. In this final Allegro the rhythmic drive is balanced with an elegantly embellished melodic line.

Charpentier, *Noëls pour instruments*

One of the most prolific and well-known composers in Paris in the late 17th century, Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704) composed music for church and stage, whether instrumental or vocal. After studying in Rome, Charpentier returned to Paris with Italian scores in hand and worked for some of the most

influential families and establishments in that city, including Marie de Lorraine, duchess de Guise, who cultivated one of the largest musical organizations not just in Paris, but in all of France.

Perhaps as a result of his association with Mademoiselle de Guise, in 1672, Charpentier began collaborating with Molière's theatrical troop, the 'Troupe du Roy,' — eventually called the Comédie-Française — an association that continued some 20 years after the playwright's death.

Charpentier was a rising star in Paris and his music was heard in convent churches (one account remarked on the crowds that came just to hear his *Tenebrae* music) as well as royal chapels, where his motets were a favorite of Louis XIV. He was also master of the chapel at the Jesuit-run Collège de Clermont and then maître de musique for St Louis, the main Jesuit church in Paris. One of 32 sacred instrumental works, he composed the *Noëls pour instruments* around 1690, filling them with all the energy of carolers outside the door.

Biber, Mystery Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, *Nativity*

Bohemian-born Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (1644?-1704) was one of the greatest violinists of the 17th century. By age 24, his reputation as a violin virtuoso was firmly established and he was working as a musician for the Bishop of Olmütz, today Olomouc in the Czech Republic. In 1670, while on a trip to purchase instruments for the bishop's ensemble, Biber accepted a position with the Archbishop of Salzburg. Although he left Olmütz without warning or permission, he was officially "released" from his Olmütz position 6 years later, during which time he continued to send compositions to his "former" employer. In Salzburg, Biber's musical skills were soon rewarded with titles of nobility; he was made a knight and lord high steward.

Biber was equally well-known for his compositions and treatises as for his playing; however, it is the solo violin music that has survived. *The Mystery (or Rosary) Sonatas*, fifteen sonatas for violin and continuo and one passacaglia for unaccompanied violin, were written after Biber had moved to Salzburg. Scholars believe that he performed these works at the conclusion of special services dedicated to the Rosary that took place in the month of October at the Salzburg Cathedral. Until its publication in 1905, the collection was only known through one manuscript, which contains an image depicting each event, such as the Nativity, at the start of each sonata.

Fourteen of the fifteen sonatas are *scordatura* works; that is, the soloist must change the tuning of the violin: The Nativity, the third sonata in Biber's series, requires the violin to be tuned to B, F#, B, D, from lowest to highest. The key of B Minor might seem unusual for a Christmas composition, but it enhances the meditative and solemnly reverential aspect of this piece.

Torelli, Concerto grosso in G Minor, Op. 8, No. 6, "Christmas Concerto"

Because Dall'Abaco and Giuseppe Torelli (1658-1709) were both born in Verona, it was generally assumed that Torelli taught the younger composer. There is, however, no firm evidence to support this theory and by the time Dall'Abaco was 11 years old, Torelli had moved to Bologna where he was hired as an instrumentalist at the San Petronio Basilica. (There is no record of who taught Torelli violin.) In 1696, after the San Petronio ensemble was disbanded for financial reasons, Torelli went to Ansbach where he was named *maestro di concerto* for the Margrave of Brandenburg. By 1701, Torelli returned to Bologna

and continued to perform and compose until his death eight years later. Torelli was described by a contemporary as "a man not only of docile and humble habits, but also erudite and eloquent." The same can be said of his Concerto grosso in G Minor, one of 12 twelve concertos published posthumously as opus 8 — *Concerti grossi con una pastorale per il SS Natale* (Concertos grosso with a pastoral for the Nativity). The pastoral, replete with the lilting rhythms and straight-forward melodic lines played over a long-held bass line, has come to be associated with Christmas through the story of the angels announcing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. Although this style of composition is connected with Italian composers of the 17th and 18th centuries, pastoral songs for Christmas originating in Germany, Spain, and beyond point to an earlier and wide-spread musical tradition.

Telemann, *Sinfonia spirituosa*

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) —born in Magdeburg—went to Leipzig to study law in 1701, in order, as he said in his autobiography, to please his mother. Soon, however, music overshadowed everything else. Telemann founded the Leipzig Collegium Musicum and was named music director of city's opera house. Four years later, Telemann left Leipzig and contemplated returning only once. In 1722, the music position at St. Thomas's Church became available. Telemann applied and was the unanimous first choice of the selection committee. After leveraging the Leipzig job offer with his employers in Hamburg —the result of which was greater job security and more money — Telemann turned down the Leipzig position. (It was eventually offered to Johann Sebastian Bach.)

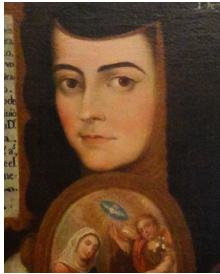
The first movement of Telemann's *Sinfonia spirituosa* for two violins, viola, optional trumpet, and basso continuo captures the intimacy of the small ensemble with conversational passages; these then alternate with sections that feel more robust due to their rhythmic momentum. The second movement, a delicate Largo with sustained sonorities, is followed by an energetic closing.

The popularity of the concerto in the Baroque and rise of the virtuoso instrumentalist reflected not only the new sound of soloist-plus-ensemble but also the technical advances made in instrument building. The violin family, with a rich sound quality still prized today, helped to define a new era of instrumental music. No longer merely accompaniment for the voice, instrumental music expressed both the lyrical and dramatic, and the concerto became the preferred means of displaying the abilities of performer. Whether or not the works on today's concert were directly inspired by the Christmas season, each possesses moments to be shared and savored.

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CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD HISTORICALLY INFORMED PERFORMANCE FELLOW

THE WORLD BEYOND



Juana Inés de la Cruz

Portrait by Fray Miguel de Herrera



María Andrea Casamayor

Portrait by Eulogia Merle



Ignatius Sancho

Portrait by Thomas Gainsborough

- 1676** Biber completes his Mystery Sonatas. They are published in 1905.
- 1679** Landscape painter Wang Hui, one of the Six Masters of the early Qing dynasty, completes *The Beauty of Green Mountains and Rivers*.
- 1683** The comedy *Los Empenos de Una Casa* (Pawns of a House) by Mexican nun, poet, and musician Juana Inés de la Cruz, O.S.H. is performed in Mexico City to celebrate the birth of the Spanish Viceroy's first son.
- 1690** Charpentier composes *Noël pour instruments*. The work will not be published until 1973.
- 1690** The Nawab of Bengal grants a trading license to the East India Company, which develops a trading post in the Kolkata area.
- 1700** By the turn of the 18th century, Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655-1731), invents the "gravicembalo col piano e forte," a keyboard instrument that plays softly and loudly based on how forcefully the keys are engaged.
- 1707** Mount Fuji erupts on December 16, sending ash as far as the city of Edo, sixty miles to the north.
- 1720** Spanish mathematician and author María Andrea Casamayor is born in Zaragoza.
- 1720** Originally titled "Guillô, pran ton tamborin" (William, take your drum), the Christmas carol today called "Patapan" is published. Written by Bernard de La Monnoye, the French carol in Burgundian dialect was later adapted into English.
- 1721** With the construction of a fort that will eventually become the city of Baton Rouge, the French establish the colony of Louisiana and control the Mississippi River region.
- c. 1729** Born on a slave ship, composer and author Ignatius Sancho becomes a leader of the Abolitionist movement in Britain and the first black man to vote in a general election.
- 1732** The University of Naples "L'Orientale," the oldest school in Europe specializing in the study of non-western language and culture, is founded.

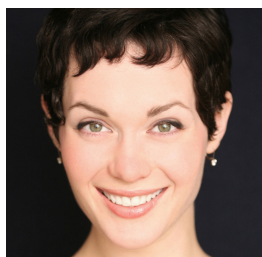
INSTRUMENT SPOTLIGHT THE BASSO CONTINUO GROUP

In the Baroque, the basso continuo players were the heart of the ensemble, providing the rhythmic foundation and harmonic direction as well as enriching the overall sound of the music. Although the precise instrumentation was often not indicated by the composer, a typical basso continuo group consisted of an instrument to play the bass line and another to realize chords.



For today's performance, cello and bass will play the bass line, while harpsichord will realize chords using figured bass, a traditional shorthand of numbers and sometimes symbols, like those seen here from Dall'Abaco's *Sinfonia in D Major, Op. 6, No. 12*.

ARTIST BIOS



Emily Marvosh, *host*

Emily Marvosh has been a frequent soloist with the Handel and Haydn Society since 2011. She has also received praise for her “plum-wine voice,” and “graceful allure,” on the stages of Carnegie Hall, Jordan Hall, Disney Hall, Lincoln Center, Prague’s Smetana Hall, and Vienna’s Stefansdom. Recent solo appearances include the American Bach Soloists, Charlotte Symphony, Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony, Chorus Pro Musica, Princeton Festival, Music Worcester, and Cantata Singers.

She is a member of the Lorelei Ensemble, which promotes innovative new music for women. With Lorelei, she has enjoyed collaborations with composer David Lang, BMOP, and the BSO.

She supports Common Cause and Rosie’s Place as a member of Beyond Artists, a coalition that donates concert fees to organizations they care about.



Ian Watson, *director and keyboards*

Multi-talented Ian Watson has been described by *The Times* in London as a “world-class soloist”, performer of “virtuosic panache” and by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as “a conductor of formidable ability.” He is Artistic Director of Arcadia Players Period-Instrument Orchestra, Music Director of the Connecticut Early Music Festival, and Associate Conductor of the Handel and Haydn Society.

Ian won a scholarship at age 14 to the Junior School of the Royal Academy of Music in London, later winning all the prizes for organ performance. He completed his studies with Flor Peeters in Belgium.

Ian has appeared with most major UK orchestras and also the Polish and Stuttgart Chamber Orchestras, Bremen Philharmonic, Rhein-Main Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Komische Oper Berlin, and Darmstadt State Opera among numerous others. He is featured on many film soundtracks including *Amadeus*, Polanski’s *Death and the Maiden*, *Restoration*, *Cry the Beloved Country*, *Voices from A Locked Room*, and the BBC’s production of *David Copperfield*.

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Aisslinn Nosky†
CONCERTMASTER CHAIR FUNDED
BY RHODA & PAUL JOSS

Abigail Karr
Guimar Turgeon

Violin II

Christina Day Martinson*
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ABOUT THE HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY



Boston's Handel and Haydn Society performs Baroque and Classical music with a freshness, a vitality, and a creativity that inspires all ages. H+H has been captivating audiences for 206 consecutive seasons (the most of any performing arts organization in the United States) speaking to its success at converting new audiences to this extraordinary music, generation after generation.

H+H performed the "Hallelujah" chorus from Handel's *Messiah* in its first concert in 1815, gave the American premiere in 1818, and ever since has been both a musical and a civic leader in the Boston community. During the Civil War, H+H gave numerous concerts in support of the Union Army (H+H member Julia Ward Howe wrote "The Battle Hymn of the Republic") and on January 1, 1863, H+H performed at the Grand Jubilee Concert celebrating the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation. Two years later, H+H performed at the memorial service for Abraham Lincoln.

Today, H+H's Orchestra and Chorus delight more than 50,000 listeners annually with a nine-week subscription series at Symphony Hall and other leading venues. Through the Karen S. and George D. Levy Education Program, H+H supports seven youth choirs of singers in grades 2-12, and provides thousands of complimentary tickets to students and communities throughout Boston, ensuring the joy of music is accessible to all.

H+H's numerous free community concerts include an annual commemoration of the original 1863 Emancipation Proclamation concert on December 31 of every year, in collaboration with the Museum of African American History.

The artistic director of the Handel and Haydn Society is Harry Christophers, who is also founding artistic director of The Sixteen in London. Under Christophers's leadership, H+H has released 14 CDs on the CORO label and has toured nationally and internationally.

In all these ways, H+H fulfills its mission to inspire the intellect, touch the heart, elevate the soul, and connect all of us with our shared humanity through transformative experiences with Baroque and Classical music.