



EXPERIENCE
LIVING MUSIC



GLORIES OF THE BAROQUE: VIVALDI

February 14 + 16, 2021

HANDEL+HAYDN SOCIETY

GLORIES OF THE BAROQUE: VIVALDI

February 14 + 16, 2021
Saint Cecilia Parish, Boston

Streamed Online
2,527th Concert

PERFORMERS

Emily Marvosh, *host*
Aisslinn Nosky, *director and violin*
Ian Watson, *organ*
Reginald Mobley, *countertenor*
H+H Orchestra

PROGRAM

Concerto for Violin in D Major, RV 230

Antonio Vivaldi
(1678-1741)

Allegro
Larghetto
Allegro
Aisslinn Nosky, *violin*

Cantata "Cessate, omai cessate", RV 684

Vivaldi

Reginald Mobley, *countertenor*

Concerto for Violin and Organ in D Minor, RV 541

Vivaldi

Allegro
Grave
Allegro
Aisslinn Nosky, *violin*
Ian Watson, *organ*

BONUS MUSICAL SELECTION

Allegro from Concerto for 2 Violins and Cello in D Minor, RV 565

Vivaldi

Aisslinn Nosky and Susanna Ogata, *violins*
Guy Fishman, *cello*

This program is made possible in part by the generous support of Christopher R. Yens and Temple V. Gill.

**Aisslinn Nosky, director and violin,
is sponsored in part by Kate S. Flather.**

PROGRAM NOTES MODERN MASTER

Not unlike professional musicians today, Antonio Vivaldi juggled many interests and activities simultaneously throughout his career. A violin virtuoso, composer, and impresario, he taught and wrote for the students at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice. He also published his instrumental music, even as he wrote and staged his operas in Venice and beyond.

In 1703, Vivaldi was appointed *maestro di violino* (master of the violin) at the Pio Ospedale della Pietà, one of four charitable institutions established in Venice which came to be known for its outstanding musical training. Vivaldi's contract was renewed annually until 1709, when he was officially dismissed, either as a cost-cutting measure, or more likely, because his students were now capable performers and teachers who could train the younger students. Two years later, Vivaldi returned; however, growing opposition at subsequent yearly re-appointments suggests that his relationship with the governing board was sometimes problematic. Still, with the departure of the composer Francesco Gasparini in 1713, Vivaldi soon had the opportunity to compose sacred music for the Pietà, which he did whole-heartedly for the next two years. He was again released from the Pietà in March 1716 but was rehired 2 months later as *maestro de' concerti*. This pattern continued throughout much of Vivaldi's career.

Perhaps a contributing factor to both the Pietà's continuing discontentment with – and reappointment of – Vivaldi is the composer's ambition to establish himself as an opera composer (which required traveling) and an instrumental composer. He had published collections of trio sonatas (op. 1) and violin sonatas (op. 2) earlier, but with his *L'estro armonico*, op. 3 (1711), Vivaldi's fame as an instrumental composer was indisputable. This collection of concertos for one, two, and four violin soloists was popular across Europe. J.S. Bach transcribed five of the op. 3 concertos for keyboard, including the Concerto for Violin in D major, and the collection was published in England a few years after it was first issued. Other compositions by Vivaldi made their way to America via England, including his op. 2 violin sonatas, a copy of which was owned by Thomas Jefferson.

Vivaldi next published his *La stravaganza*, op. 4, a set of 12 violin concertos in 1716, followed by three more sets of pieces issued over the next four years. Beginning in 1723, the governors of the Pietà contracted to have Vivaldi compose two concertos a month as well as lead rehearsals when he was in Venice. According to payment records, this agreement lasted for six years and resulted in 140 concertos.

The concertos collectively titled *The Four Seasons* were published as part of a larger collection entitled *Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione*, op. 8 (1725), with four more sets of compositions following in as many years. After 1729, Vivaldi stopped publishing because he claimed he could make more money selling his compositions in manuscript.

The beginning of Vivaldi's work in opera can now be dated to 1705 with the composition of an overture. His first documented stage work came eight years later at the Teatro San Angelo, where he and his father, who was a violinist at St. Mark's and the Ospedale dei Mendicanti, worked as co-impresarios for several seasons. Vivaldi returned to this theater in 1726; the intervening years were spent

traveling and showcasing his operas in other courts and cities in Italy. Similarly, the last ten years of his life were filled with traveling and opera productions. His last trip, to Vienna, was taken with the intention to stage operas there; however, all theaters in the city were closed after the death of Charles VI in October 1740 and it seems Vivaldi was waiting for them to re-open when he died in July 1741.

Vivaldi's life was not without controversy. He was ordained a priest in 1703, but stopped saying Mass a few years later due, he said, to "a tightness in his chest." Today, it is believed that Vivaldi suffered from asthma. This circumstance was compounded by that fact that he traveled with Anna Girò, an alto for whom Vivaldi wrote opera roles and other music. Her presence in his life, despite being accompanied by her older sister who acted as a chaperone, caused open speculation as to the exact nature of their relationship; Vivaldi avowed that Girò was only an assistant. Both issues were at the root of Vivaldi being refused entrance to Ferrara in 1738 as well as proceedings to censure him for conduct unbecoming a priest a year earlier.

Concerto for Violin in D Major, RV 230

The title of Vivaldi's highly successful opus 3 collection of concertos, *L'estro armonico*, does not translate easily. Sometimes rendered as "The Musical Fantasy" or "The Harmonic Whim," these translations attempt to convey the effect of these concertos which balance establishing a pattern and breaking that pattern with unexpected twists and turns. One of the most influential publications of its kind, many of these concertos became favorites of performers and audiences alike; excerpts from the publication can be found in violin treatises published well after Vivaldi's death and the formal structure codified in the set is often emulated by other Baroque composers.

Opening with a fanfare that suggests a curtain rising, the compact first Allegro soon drops all pretense and falls into an easy conversation between the full ensemble (tutti) and soloist. The second movement, Larghetto, begins with luxurious harmonies, as the repetition of chords draws attention to each new sonority in the opening tutti section. This contrasts with the apparent simplicity of the solo section which comes to dominate this movement.

In the final Allegro the alternation of music for tutti and soloist is once again at the forefront. After a short tune reminiscent of the first movement played only by the violins, the exchange between ensemble and soloist, while good-natured, takes on a tinge of competition as well.

Cantata "Cessate, omai cessate," RV 684

Vivaldi's vocal works, whether sacred or secular, express strong emotions through many musical techniques. "Cessate, omai cessate," composed in 1727 or 1728, is a lament over lost love told through two pairs of recitatives and da capo arias. For the first aria, "Ah, ch'infelise semper" (Ah, that I should be forever sad), Vivaldi's interesting orchestration beautifully conveys a sense of nostalgia and longing. Some of the strings play with the bow (*arco*) while the others play the same line of music *pizzicato* (plucking the strings). The result is a unique sound, smooth and flowing with harp-like accents. In the second aria, the voice and strings converge on the same melody at certain text lines such as "Andrò d'Acheronte su la nera sponda" (I shall go to the Acheron, to the darkening bank). This change of musical texture, from voice-plus-accompaniment to unison, draws new attention to the text. In this same aria, the word "morire" (die) is emphasized as well; the second and third syllables are consistently set by Vivaldi using the closest possible interval, the half-step.

In 1715, one audience member described a performance by Vivaldi in terms of astoundingly fast and difficult passages coupled with long, lyrical lines, both played effortlessly. There is no doubt that Vivaldi amazed his audiences with his skills; his music demands no less of anyone who takes up his vocal and instrumental works today.

Concerto for Violin and Organ in D Minor, RV 541

The meaning of the word "concerto" has two probable roots; one of these, *concertare*, meaning "to contend" and the other, *conserere*, meaning "to join together." Both meanings can be applied to the works on today's program. The concerto was taken to new expressive heights by Vivaldi, even as the genre became grounded in clear formal patterns, especially the three-movement structure of fast-slow-fast and, within the movement, defined sections for the soloist and orchestra. Beyond this general outline, each concerto – and its performance – is distinct.

Of the hundreds of concertos Vivaldi wrote over the course of his career, most are for solo instruments, particularly (and logically) the violin. While not as numerous, his other concertos include some 40 double concertos. These works for two soloists often pair related instruments, but there are also somewhat more adventurous pairings, such as the Concerto for Violin and Organ in D minor.

The complementary articulations and distinct colors of the organ and violin emerge throughout this concerto, in which the organ – usually relegated to a role in the basso continuo – now moves into the spotlight with the violin. The opening Allegro bubbles with rhythmic energy, with the first organ entrance refreshing and even a little surprising to the ear. In the sweetly mournful Grave, the violin takes the lead with the organ sustaining and occasionally responding, while the accompanying strings pulse steadfastly. The emergence of the organ at the close of this second movement is unobtrusive, functioning as both a conclusion of this movement and an aural bridge to the final Allegro. Here the blending of the soloists' lines and their often whimsical exchanges are offset by the driving regularity in the accompaniment.

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THE WORLD BEYOND

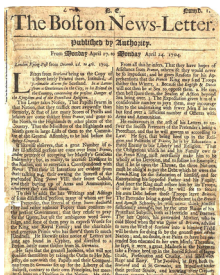


Hans Sloane

Portrait by
Stephen Slaughter



**Example of
Kakiemon porcelain**



**Front page of The
Boston News-Letter**
April 24, 1704

- c. 1675** Dutch traders begin importing Kakiemon. Developed by Sakaida Kakiemon in the mid-17th century, this style of Japanese porcelain with overglaze decoration is credited with influencing not only future generations of Japanese potters, but also the French Chantilly and German Meissen styles of porcelain popular in the 18th century.
- 1687** In an attack on the Ottoman army, which occupied the city of Athens since the 15th century, the Venetian army ignited ammunition stored in the Parthenon. There was extensive damage to the building and some sculptures inside it.
- 1704** The *Boston News-Letter*, one of the first newspapers published in Massachusetts, issues its first edition on April 24. Remembered today for its report of the death of the English pirate Blackbeard in 1718, the newspaper initially reported on politics in England and Europe before expanding its coverage to include news from the colonies.
- 1707** Hans Sloane, physician to the British Governor of Jamaica, publishes the first volume of his observations while living in the Caribbean. *Voyage to the Islands*, a detailed account of Sloane's travels, includes a description of a "Mr. Baptiste," who Sloane describes as "the best musician of the place," now believed to be the earliest document referring to a black musician and composer.
- 1710** Maria Pronchishcheva, believed to be the first woman to explore the Arctic, is born in Russia.
- 1720** The artist Canaletto, son of Bernard Canal who worked in the Teatro San Angelo with Vivaldi, begins specializing in images of the Venetian canals.
- 1721** In the preface to his *Grounds and Rules of Musick explained; or, An Introduction to the Art of Singing by Note*, Rev. Thomas Walter complains that church choirs in Boston know only four or five tunes and these "had become so tortured, and ... so hideous as to be bad beyond expression and so drawing that the singer had ... to pause twice on one word to take [a] breath." This is one of many calls throughout the 18th century to improve singing in New England churches.



EXPERIENCE
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THE MAGIC OF TELEMANN

March 14 + 16, 2021

A shining star in the Baroque constellation, Telemann is the centerpiece of this concert featuring five of H+H's principal musicians. Fiery passions are laced throughout the rhythms, sure to warm a winter's day.

HANDEL+HAYDN SOCIETY

ARTIST BIOS

PHOTO BY LIZ LINDER



Aisslinn Nosky, violin

Aisslinn Nosky was appointed Concertmaster of the Handel and Haydn Society in 2011. With a reputation for being one of the most dynamic and versatile violinists of her generation, Aisslinn is in great demand internationally as a soloist, leader, and concertmaster. Recent collaborations include the Thunder Bay Symphony, the Lameque International Baroque Festival Orchestra, Arion Baroque Orchestra, the Calgary Philharmonic, Collegium Musicum Hanyang, and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra.

Aisslinn is also a member of I FURIOSI Baroque Ensemble. For over a decade, this innovative Canadian ensemble has presented its own edgy and inventive concert series in Toronto and toured Europe and North America, while drawing new audiences in to Baroque music. With the Eybler Quartet, Aisslinn explores repertoire from the first century of the string quartet literature on period instruments. The Eybler Quartet's latest recording of Haydn's Opus 33 string quartets was released to critical acclaim in 2012.

Since 2005, Aisslinn has been a highly active member of Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and has toured and appeared as soloist with this internationally renowned ensemble.



Ian Watson, director and harpsichord

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*.

PHOTO BY LIZ LINDER

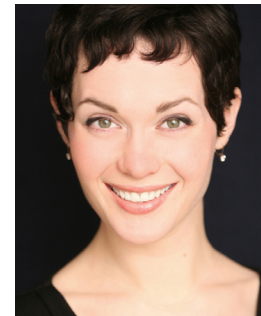


Reginald Mobley, countertenor

Countertenor Reginald L. Mobley fully intended to speak his art through watercolors and oil pastels until circumstance demanded that his own voice should speak for itself. Since reducing his visual color palette to the black and white of a score, he's endeavored to open up a wider spectrum onstage.

A longtime member of twice GRAMMY® nominated ensemble Seraphic Fire, Reggie has recently appeared with Agave Baroque, Bach Collegium San

Diego, Boston Early Music Festival, Monteverdi Choir & English Baroque Soloists, Pacific MusicWorks, Freiburger Barockorchester, and the Handel and Haydn Society. With the latter, he had the honor of becoming the first Black person to lead H+H during its Bicentennial anniversary and was recently named the organization's first programming consultant, working to expand H+H's concert repertoire to include more composers of color. He has curated and lead concerts for H+H since 2015.



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.

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Aisslinn Nosky†
CONCERTMASTER CHAIR FUNDED
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Krista Buckland Reisner
Jane Starkman

Violin II

Susanna Ogata*
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Ian Watson*
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† *Concertmaster*

* *Principal*

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Vivaldi: Cessate, omai cessate

Anonymous text

Cessate, omai cessate
rimembranze crudeli d'un affetto tiranno;
già barbare e spietate mi cangiate
i contenti in un immenso affanno.
Cessate, omai cessate
di lacerarmi il petto,
di trafiggermi l'alma,
di toglier al mio cor riposo e calma.
Povero core afflitto e abbandonato,

se ti toglie la pace un affetto tiranno,
perché un volto spietato,
un'alma infida la sola
crudeltà pasce ed annida.

Ah, ch'infelice sempre
mi vuol Dorilla ingrata,
ah, sempre più spietata
m'astringe a lagrimar.

Per me non v'è ristoro,
per me non v'è più spene.
E il fier martoro e le mie pene,
solo la morte può consolar.

À voi dunque, ricorro orridi specchi,
taciturni orrori, solitari ritiri,
ed, ombre amiche, trà voi
porto il mio duolo,
perchè spero dà voi quella pietate,
che'n Dorilla inhumana non annida.
Vengo, spelonche amate,
vengo specchi graditi, affine meco involto
il mio tormento in voi resti sepolto.

Nell'orrido albergo, ricetta di pene,
Potrò il mio tormento sfogare contento,
Potrò ad alta voce chiamare spietata
Dorilla l'ingrata, morire potrò.
Andrò d'Acheronte su la nera sponda
Tingendo quest'onda di sangue innocente
Gridando vendetta farò,

Ed ombra baccante vendetta farò.

Cease, henceforth cease,
cruel memories of despotic love;
heartless and pitiless, you have turned
my happiness into immense sorrow.
Cease, henceforth cease
to tear my breast,
to pierce my soul,
to rob my heart of peace and calm.
Wretched, injured and forsaken you are, my
heart,

if a tyrannical passion can rob you of tranquility
because a pitiless countenance,
a faithless soul,
harbors and nurtures nothing but cruelty.

Ah, that I should be forever sad
my ungrateful love Dorilla
ah, ever more pitilessly
she forces out my tears.

For me there is no remedy,
for me no more hope.
Only death will assuage
my bitter pain and sorrow.

So it is to you, gloomy places,
silent horrors, lonely caves
and friendly shades, that I come
and bring by grief,
because I hope to obtain from you a pity
that is not to be found in ungrateful Dorilla.
Beloved caves, I come,
I come, welcoming places, until finally,
racked by my pains, I will bury myself in you.

In this horrible refuge, sheltering from my pains,
I shall be able to give vent to my grief,
to call out;
Dorilla, heartless and ungrateful, and to die.
I shall go to the Acheron, to the darkening bank,
staining that stream, with my blameless blood,
crying for revenge, and, like the shade of a
Bacchante,
I will take my revenge.

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Nathaniel Smith

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.