



EXPERIENCE
LIVING MUSIC



GLORIES OF THE BAROQUE

November 22 + 24, 2020

HANDEL+HAYDN SOCIETY

GLORIES OF THE BAROQUE

November 22 + 24, 2020 at 3:00PM
St. Cecilia Parish, Boston

2,523rd Concert
Streamed Online

PROGRAM

Concerto Grosso in B-flat Major, Op. 6, No. 11

Arcangelo Corelli
(1653–1713)

Preludio: Andante largo
Allemanda: Allegro
Adagio – Andante largo
Sarabanda: Largo
Giga: Vivace

Ciacona from Concerto Grosso No. 12 in G Major, *Propitia Sydera*

Georg Muffat
(1653–1704)

Concerto Grosso in G Major, Op. 6, No. 1, HWV 319

George Frideric Handel
(1685–1759)

A tempo giusto
Allegro
Adagio
Allegro
Allegro

PERFORMERS

Emily Marvosh, *host*

Aisslinn Nosky, *director and violin concertino*

Susanna Ogata, *violin concertino*

Guy Fishman, *cello concertino*

H+H Orchestra

Violin I

Aisslinn Nosky†
CONCERTMASTER CHAIR FUNDED
BY RHODA & PAUL JOSS

Julie Leven
Jesse Irons

Violin II

Susanna Ogata*
Abigail Karr
Jane Starkman

Viola

Jenny Stirling*
Anne Black

Cello

Guy Fishman*
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Colleen McGary-Smith

Bass

Heather Miller Lardin*
AMELIA PEABODY CHAIR

Harpsichord

Ian Watson*

† *Concertmaster*

* *Principal*

PROGRAM NOTES

COMING TO ROME

Arcangelo Corelli and George Frideric Handel were both 22 years old when they traveled to Rome and entered the spare-no-expense world of the aristocracy. Italy, unlike France or England, was a conglomeration of independent cities and areas, most with some connection to either the Austrian Habsburgs or the Papal States. Moreover, the effects of the Counter-Reformation, the Roman Catholic response to the formation of Protestant religions in the 16th century, were still reverberating throughout the peninsula. Artists were commissioned to erect statues to the 12 Apostles to fill the empty niches of the Lateran Basilica; those in the nave of St. Peter's had already been filled with statues honoring the founders of religious orders. Devotional sites too were adorned with sculptures commissioned from the finest artists living in Rome, such as *Stanislas Kostka on his Deathbed* by the Parisian-born sculptor Pierre Le Gros the Younger.

Born in Fusignano in the present-day province of Ravenna, Corelli came to Rome around 1675 by way of Bologna, which boasted some of the greatest Italian violinists and composers of the late 17th century. Corelli acknowledged his connection to this musical heritage by including the epithet "Il Bolognese" on the title-pages of his first three publications.

This musical pedigree and Corelli's own prowess as a violinist led to many fabricated accounts of his life. One such story, circulated some 50 years after his death, attributed Corelli's fame to a trip to Paris where his talent supposedly enraged Jean-Baptiste Lully – court composer to King Louis XIV – so much that Lully drove the younger composer from that city. Others claimed that Corelli spent time in Spain or in Germany working for the Elector of Bavaria.

Why would such stories emerge? One reason is that little reliable information is known about Corelli's life before he moved to Rome. But these narratives are also an indication of just how influential Corelli's music was during his lifetime and beyond. Composers used Corelli's music as models for their own: Johann Sebastian Bach borrowed a theme from the second movement of Corelli's Trio Sonata op. 3, no. 4, for his Fugue in B minor, BWV 579, and Handel's collection of concertos – which he published as opus 6 – were, in turn, modeled on Corelli's own opus 6 concertos.

As shown by their (rather long) title—*Concerti grossi con duoi Violini, e Violoncello di Concertino obligati, e duoi altri Violin, Viola e Basso di Concerto Grosso ad arbitrio, che si potranno radoppiare*—Corelli's opus 6 concertos required two violins and cello but left optional the addition of other strings in a larger ensemble. Corelli also wrote that the number of instruments in the larger ensemble could be doubled so that there would be more to a part.

Corelli's Concerto grosso in B-flat, Op. 6, No. 11 is a study in contrasts in which its six movements can be heard as three pairs. The lush sound of the Preludio, featuring long lines of tension and resolution, offsets the unrelenting cello line of the Allemanda. Corelli balances these opening movements with a delicate Adagio and rich Andante largo before closing the concerto with a pair of dance-inspired movements.

Born the same year as Corelli, the organist and composer Georg Muffat described hearing Corelli's concertos in Rome "performed with the utmost accuracy" while visiting Italy in the early 1680s. Muffat not only heard Corelli's music, he also had his own music performed in Corelli's home, and some scholars have suggested that he influenced Corelli. Muffat's first two collections of instrumental music reflect his association with Corelli in their texture (two violins plus a bass instrument playing in alternation with a larger ensemble). In the preface to his second collection, Muffat specifies that these works have multiple uses at court, whether as entertainment for nobility and their guests or "at state banquets, serenades, and assemblies of musical amateurs and virtuosi." He is equally adamant that these works are not appropriate for use in church. The movements of the Concerto grosso No. 12 in G major, *Propitia Sydera* (Favorable Stars) are based on the composer's earlier compositions. The subtitle is practical and not necessarily descriptive: Muffat provided each concerto in this set with a distinctive, if cryptic, title in order to suggest the occasion for which the work could be played.

Corelli played violin in concerts throughout Rome and enjoyed the patronage of that city's wealthiest and most influential residents, among them Queen Christina of Sweden, who came to Rome after she abdicated her throne. Corelli dedicated his first publication to her and in 1706 was elected to the Arcadian Academy of Rome, founded to perpetuate the concerts and artist gatherings Queen Christina famously hosted during her life. The society continued well into the 18th century: the German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe writes about it in his *Italian Journey*, a report of his travels in Italy between 1786 and 1788.

Queen Christina's palace was the site of a celebration in honor of the English ambassador to the Holy See, for which Corelli led 150 string players and 100 singers. With her support, Corelli also led performances of two different masses, one of which included 'a new sinfonia with trumpets' written by him.

Corelli's reputation soon brought him to the attention of Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili at whose home Corelli performed for the cardinal's weekly Sunday concerts. Corelli's opus 2 sonatas, dedicated to the cardinal, may have been premiered at these concerts, which were a highlight of Rome's musical life. Corelli was soon employed by the cardinal and lived at the Pamphili palace. He composed, played chamber music, and directed some of the more ostentatious musical performances, including one in honor of another cardinal, Rinaldo d'Este, for which Corelli led an ensemble of 80 instrumentalists.

One of the most ardent—and lavish—supporters of music in this ecclesiastical city was Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni. Grandnephew to a pope, the independently wealthy Ottoboni was a patron to both Corelli and Handel. A member of the Arcadian Academy, he was a poet who was fond of extravagant musical performances – especially those that featured settings of his texts. The responsibility for organizing and leading the musical side of these productions often fell to Corelli, who lived at the Ottoboni palace beginning in 1708 and regularly performed at the cardinal's Monday concerts.

Handel may have participated in the Monday concerts at Ottoboni's palace after he arrived in Rome in early 1707. He also wrote his first large-scale work in Italian, an allegorical oratorio *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* (The Triumph of Time and Disillusion) with a text by Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili. For the oratorio's premiere in May 1707, the story is told that Corelli, now about 54 years old, was

embarrassed and put out when Handel played a passage in the overture that the older violinist could not execute properly.

Handel composed his second oratorio, *La Resurrezione*, for another patron, Francesco Ruspoli, who was later named a prince by the pope after defending the Papal States. Another member of the Arcadian Academy, Ruspoli spared no expense for musical performances, one of which included an ensemble of some 45 instrumentalists led by Corelli.

Just as Corelli's nickname was a reminder that he came to Rome via Bologna, Handel's nickname, "il Sassone," identified both his German heritage and the fact that he had made the Italian style his own. Handel's extraordinary keyboard skills also generated all kinds of stories. One rumor attempted to explain Handel's talent by saying that he wore a magic hat when he played. Another account originated in Venice; when Handel, who was wearing a mask, began playing a concert there, the listeners ventured guesses that the performer was either Handel or the Devil.

Handel stayed in Italy until 1710 when he accepted the position as Kapellmeister for the Elector of Hanover, soon to be England's King George I. Once established in London, Handel became a naturalized citizen and adopted the Anglicized version of his name. Handel's time in Rome remained with him for the rest of his life, however, as evidenced by his opus 6 concertos from 1739. Although indebted to Corelli, this set of 12 concertos displays Handel's own adroitness in developing musical ideas. The expansive sound of the opening movement of Concerto grosso op. 6, no. 1 in G major underlies the rest of the concerto, whether in the spritely Allegros, the bittersweet Adagio, or the dance-like final movement. Handel advertised his opus 6 as "Twelve Grand Concertos;" like Corelli's opus 6, they are considered one of the pinnacles of Baroque concerto composition in Western music.

Handel's opus 6 concertos are just one example of how Corelli's music inspired other composers. Corelli's music was reprinted more often than any other composer of his day: his opus 1 and opus 5 were reissued some 81 times in the 18th century, not including the numerous arrangements of his music for other instruments. In England, Corelli's opus 6 concertos remained popular—sometimes even more popular than Handel's—well into the 19th century.

Today, Corelli's "Christmas" Concerto, op. 6, no. 8, remains immensely popular. In thinking about the pervasive influence of Corelli's music, we might look to descriptions of his violin playing, which ranged from "elegant and learned" to on "fire." That combination of precision and passion continues with the three concertos on today's concert.

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CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD HISTORICALLY INFORMED PERFORMANCE FELLOW

THE WORLD BEYOND



**Elena Lucrezia
Cornaro Piscopia**

*Prima donna
laureata al mondo,
Padova, Antenore,
1978; F. L.
Maschietto, Elena
Lucrezia Cornaro
Piscopia (1646-
1684)*



Statue of Po'Pay

*Po'pay (1630?-
before 1692) New
Mexico Marble by
Cliff Fragua Given
in 2005 CVC
Emancipation Hall
U.S. Capitol*

- 1677** France gains control of the island of Gorée. Off the coast of present-day Dakar, Senegal, Gorée is used as a trading post and becomes the deportation point for some 500,000 enslaved persons. Almost two hundred years later, Blaise Diagne, the first black African elected to the Chamber of Deputies of France, is born on Gorée.
- 1678** Linguist, musician, writer, and student at the University of Padua, Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia is the first woman to receive a Doctor of Philosophy degree.
- 1680** Po'Pay, a Tewa religious leader from Ohkay Owingeh, New Mexico, leads the Pueblo Revolt against Spanish colonialists.
- 1699** The grand hall of Fayu Temple is rebuilt as part of renovations begun 12 years earlier. Fayu Temple is the second largest temple located on the island of Mount Putuo, one of four sacred mountains in Chinese Buddhism.
- 1704** Sarah Kemble Knight begins her five-month journey from Boston to New York. Her detailed diary of the trip, published posthumously in 1825 as *The Journal of Mme. Knight*, is one of the few day-to-day accounts of travel in colonial New England.
- 1710** Founding of the Saint Alexander Nevsky Monastery, located on what was believed to be the site of the 1240 battle in which 19-year-old Prince Alexander Yaroslavich successfully defeated invading forces at the Neva River, earning him the nickname Alexander Nevsky.
- 1738** Francisco Menéndez is freed after being enslaved in South Carolina and escaping to Spanish Florida, where he served as captain of the enslaved militia there. The leader of the Fort Mose community outside St. Augustine, Menéndez and his wife, Maria, are evacuated to Cuba after Spain cedes Florida to the British in 1763.

INSTRUMENT SPOTLIGHT

BAROQUE VIOLIN



A period violin (bottom) and modern violin are of the same general size and shape. One distinct difference is the length of the fingerboard, which is shorter on the period instrument. The modern violin (top) also has a chin rest, an early 19th century invention.



On closer examination, the neck of the modern violin (top) is positioned at a sharper angle in relation to the body of the instrument, placing more tension on the strings. The strings on a period instrument are made from gut; those on the modern violin are metal.

ARTIST BIOS

PHOTO BY LIZ LINDER



Aisslinn Nosky, *violin*

Ms. 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, Nosky 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.

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

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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 13 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.