

Italian Legacies: *Geminiani & his English contemporaries*

TRANSFORMATION

2024-25

Wednesday 5 February 2025 | 7.30pm
West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Friday 7 February 2025 | 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall, London



Italian Legacies:

*Geminiani & his
English contemporaries*

Anna Devin *soprano*
Academy of Ancient Music
Bojan Čičić *director & violin*

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ARNE Overture in G major No. 3
MUDGE Concerto No. 1 in D major
GEMINIANI Concerto Grosso Op. 7 No. 3 in C major
LINLEY Music for the Tempest

Interval: 20 minutes

BOYCE Overture *from* Peleus and Thetis
LINLEY Violin Concerto in F major
JC BACH La Tempesta

*The 2024-25 season has been generously
supported by the Arts and Humanities
Research Council*

*The performance at West Road Concert Hall,
Cambridge, is supported by Mark West*

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Associate Ensemble

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CAMBRIDGE
ORCHESTRA-IN-RESIDENCE

from John McMunn

chief executive

Last month I became a British Citizen after more than 20 years living and working in England. Joining me in making this significant step at the Shire Hall in Alconbury Weald were nationals from Myanmar, Nigeria, Spain, Romania, Canada, Taiwan – myriad countries from across the world. In his welcome, a local councillor emphasised the diversity of perspectives and voices we would all bring to the UK, while also celebrating the fact that one nation could encompass us all. This felt reassuringly modern and progressive, but really ‘there is nothing new under the sun’: England has a rather longer history of multiculturalism than we often recognise.

xTonight’s programme celebrates one aspect of this history – six composers, from three different nations, whose music speaks with distinctiveness and specificity but nevertheless through a common language. This could be described as the ‘Italianate style’ (Graham Coatman emphasises in his accompanying note that King George I had a keen interest in ‘continental culture’ and brought numerous Italian musicians to court during his reign). But to me this would miss the inherent



‘Englishness’ of it all. Whether of foreign- or native-born composition, this is music that was written in and for the great cultural melting pot that these islands have been for centuries, if not millennia. It is music for all of us, regardless of how it has reached us, or us it.

I’m grateful to AAM’s Leader, Bojan Čičić, for curating and directing this fascinating sequence, as well as to our guest artists and acclaimed core musicians for their sterling performances – not to mention you, dear reader. Thank you for sharing this great music with us. Enjoy the show!

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Thomas Arne (1710-78)

Overture in G major No. 3 (1761)

Richard Mudge (1718-63)

Concerto No. 1 in D major (1749)

Robert Vanryne *trumpet*

Vivace

Allegro

Larghetto Andante

Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762)

Concerto Grosso Op. 7 No. 3 in C major (1746)

French: Presto

English: Andante

Italian: Allegro assai

Thomas Linley (1756-78)

The Tempest (1777)

Anna Devin *soprano*

Texts are on page 14

Arise, ye Spirits of the Storm
O bid your faithful Ariel fly
Come unto these yellow sands
Hark, hark, the watchdogs bark
While you here do Sleeping lie
Ere you can say Come and Go
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

William Boyce (1711-79)

Overture *from* Peleus and Thetis

Thomas Linley

Violin Concerto in F major (1784)

Bojan Čičić *violin*

Moderato

Adagio

Rondeau

Johann Christian Bach (1735-82)

La Tempesta (Scena by Metastasio) (1773)

Anna Devin *soprano*

Texts on page 15

Recitative (Largo): Nò, non turbati, o Nice

Aria (Andantino): Ma tu tremi, o mio tesoro!

Recitative (Andante): Siedi, sicura sei

Aria (Allegro maestoso): E pur fra le tempeste

Italian Legacies: Geminiani & his English Contemporaries



Geminiani holding the violin solo part to Corelli's Op.6 concertos © Gerald Coke Handel Foundation

When Queen Anne died in 1714, despite going through 17 pregnancies, she left no heir to the throne of England. Some years earlier the Whigs had gained the upper hand over the aristocratic Tories in parliament, and foreseeing this situation had quickly put in place the Act of Settlement in 1701. The Act made specific provisions, requiring the successor to have a direct connection to the Stuart line, but also emphatically excluding anyone 'who followed the popish religion', or who married a papist. In addition, the Act of Union of 1707 extended these provisions to Scotland, in an attempt to pre-empt any Jacobite rebellion. The only Protestant relative left to the Stuart line was Sophia, Electress of Hanover. However

she inconveniently died a couple of months before Anne. Thus her husband George, Elector of Hanover was invited to become George I of England, and so began the Hanoverian succession which lasted until 1837.

George was considered a rather disinterested king, often returning to his beloved Hanover. His command of English (his fourth language) was poor. As Robert Walpole emerged as a strong leader of the Whigs, promoting their liberal and progressive views, with his ministers, he formed a decisive cabinet, set on overturning the long held aristocratic grip on government held by the Tories. They decided a Regency Council was necessary to rule in George's frequent absences. The effect of this was the most significant transformative process this country had ever seen. It established the concept of the constitutional monarchy, with government firmly in the hands of parliament and its ministers, which remains in place today. This was the dawn of the age of enlightenment in England (a movement that had begun in Europe in the 1680s). Importantly, what George did bring was an interest in continental culture, in particular attracting German and Italian musicians to court. Also, through the

commissions given to young painter William Kent, the royal architect and interior designer recently returned from Rome, his preference for the neo-Palladian style and all things Italian set the dominant trend for early Georgian society.

Coincidentally, 1714 was the year that **Francesco Geminiani** arrived to settle in England. Born in Lucca in 1687, he studied in Rome with Corelli, returning to Lucca to take over his father's position as violinist. He was dismissed in 1710 for 'frequent absences', then moved to Naples as leader of the opera orchestra. This was no more congenial to him, as historian Charles Burney observed, 'he was soon discovered to be so wild and unsteady, that instead of regulating and conducting the band, he threw it into confusion, as none of the performers were able to follow him in his tempo rubato, and other unexpected accelerations and relaxations of measure.' He was clearly a lively and colourful character, and as such, a perfect fit for the growing enterprising *melée* that was British society in Georgian England. Further, the rise of the 'middlings' (middle classes), taking more interest in politics, becoming successful entrepreneurs, (except for the famous 'South Sea Bubble' fiasco) defined the new prospering economy. With more money in their pockets, this sector of society was looking for entertainment to match their thirst for the new and exciting lives they were enjoying. Geminiani thus embarked on a life as virtuoso violinist and composer. Early on he played at court accompanied by Handel, who famously enjoyed Hanoverian patronage, and whose music was also imbued with the experience of his early years in Italy.

Thomas Arne (1710-78) was the most important theatrical composer in 18th-century Britain. In 1744, after a spell in Dublin, Arne returned to London as leader of the band at the Drury Lane theatre, adding composer at the Vauxhall Gardens to his CV the following year. In the 1760s he moved to Covent Garden Theatre, producing his only Italianate opera, *Atarxerxes*, libretto by Metastasio, in 1762. It employed recitative, rather than spoken dialogue, although his English comic opera *Thomas and Sally* from two years earlier in 1760 was the first through-composed opera in England. His **Overture in G major No. 3** from the set of Eight Overtures (1761) most clearly demonstrates his absorption of the fashionable Italian style. It is a sprightly three-movement 'sinfonia', typically in fast – slow – fast order, with the third movement taking a dance form, in this case a Minuet marked '*con spirito*'.

Richard Mudge (1718-63) was principally an Anglican clergyman, combining his pastoral duties with his work as composer. He was able to cultivate a relationship with Handel through his librettist Charles Jennens. Whilst Jennens himself did not specifically help, his patron Lord Aylesford installed Mudge in two permanent positions at Packington. This probably enabled Mudge to get published with

some degree of success. His Six Concertos in Seven Parts were published in 1749. Principally for two violins with strings, the **Concerto No. 1 in D major**, exceptionally includes a solo trumpet part (tonight performed by Robert Vanryne). The music shows the influence of both Handel, but also of Geminiani, as the leading composers of the day.

Geminiani produced three sets of *Concerti Grossi*, Opus 2 (1732), Opus 3 (1733) and Opus 7 (1746), making 42 *concerti* in total. Despite his reverence for his teacher Corelli, Geminiani makes important developments to the nature of the *concerto grosso* by adding a viola to the *concertino* group. This naturally enriches the texture, and allows for more contrapuntal activity. Rather than duetting violins, with a supporting bass line, the possibilities of different pairings and combinations of the four instruments is fully explored, providing a richer and deeper musical experience. In **Concerto Grosso Op. 7 No. 3 in C major**, there is additional signposting of the composer's cosmopolitan intentions: the movements are labelled French, English and Italian at the outset, with the tempo markings, *presto*, *andante* and *allegro assai*. As if to further emphasise these national traits, in an almost didactic manner, the first movement ends with a coda with heavily dotted rhythms reminiscent of the French Overture. It was only a few years later that his treatise *Art of Playing on the Violin* Op. 9, was published in London. This provides a comprehensive guide to 18th-century Italian method of violin playing, and to late Baroque performance practice in general.

The music for ***The Tempest*** by **Thomas Linley** consists of two choruses, four solo soprano songs, and a final movement with both soloist and chorus, with orchestra of wind, brass, strings and *continuo* (and timpani in the first chorus). He was a precocious child, born in 1756 (making him an exact contemporary of Mozart), and playing violin concertos at the age of eight, before heading off to Italy to study with Nardini. In his tragically short life – he died in 1778 at the age of 22 in a boating accident – he produced much extraordinary music for the theatre. The music for *The Tempest* was written for a revival of the play at Drury Lane on 4 January 1777, adding or replacing music used for previous productions by Purcell (although probably by Weldon) and Arne. The text for additional songs was probably written by Sheridan, who oversaw the whole production. The opening Storm Chorus has brilliantly scored and dramatic orchestral writing for pairs of trumpets, horns, oboes and bassoons, with timpani and strings. The solo songs are scored for soprano, duetting with an obbligato oboe, or in *Ere you can say come and go*, two flutes, with strings. The writing is florid and full of character.

Although **William Boyce** (1711-79) is better known for his instrumental music, he made his name early on with music for the theatre. Little is known about the masque ***Peleus and Thetis***, written some time before 1740. It is set on the summit of Mount Caucasus, where Prometheus has been chained for aeons for the crime of stealing fire from the gods. His torment (a vulture continually pecks at his liver) has given him the gift of prophecy, and so Peleus comes to consult him about his forbidden love for the nymph Thetis, who is also being pursued by Jupiter. The text was drawn from Lord Lansdowne's adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, first performed in 1701 with music by John Eccles. The Overture once again follows an Italian model, three sections, fast - slow - fast, this time the final dance section is a *gavotte*.

The Linleys were the most important and influential family of musicians in eighteenth-century Bath. Thomas Linley the elder was the son of a builder and carpenter who moved to the city in the late 1740s to take advantage of the building boom. He became a harpsichordist, singing teacher and composer. Thomas, the son, was said to have composed a number of violin concertos, but this **Violin Concerto in F major** is the only surviving one, thanks to the score being included in a memorial volume compiled for George III after the composer's death, now in the Royal Music Collection of the British Library. It is in the 'galant' style, as might be expected from his teacher, Nardini, and other Italians. The solo writing in the first movement is more adventurous than other contemporary English concertos, using the highest register and with passages in thirds and sixths. The slow movement is in the 'Scotch' style, fashionable at the time, and the *Rondeau* finale a cheerful *Gavotte*.

Youngest son of Johann Sebastian Bach, **Johann Christian Bach** (1735-82), known as the 'English Bach', began his studies with his father, and half-brother, CPE Bach, but in 1764 moved to Bologna, Italy, to study with Padre Martini, also becoming organist at Milan Cathedral in 1760. He wrote church music, but in 1762 moved to London to premier three operas at the King's Theatre, *Orione*, *Zanaida* and *Adriano in Siria*. He met Mozart, aged eight, on his London tour, and subsequently taught the young Mozart, influencing him in the use of wind instruments in his early symphonies. ***La Tempesta*** is a dramatic cantata to a text by Pietro Metastasio in four sections. The first performance was given by Cecilia Grassi, Bach's wife, on 17 May 1773 at Hickfords' Rooms on Brewer Street in London. The text is written from a male perspective, and would normally have been performed by a counter tenor (or castrato) using appropriate costume, movement and gesture typical of Baroque opera at the time.

Programme note © Graham Coatman

Linley *The Tempest*

Chorus: Arise, ye spirits of the storm

Arise, ye spirits of the storm,
Appal the guilty eye,
Tear the wild waves, ye mighty winds,
Ye fated lightnings, fly!
Dart thro' the tempest of the deep,
And rocks and seas confound.

Hark, how the vengeful thunder roars.
Amazement flames around.
Behold the fate-devoted bark
Dash'd on the trembling shore.
Mercy! the sinking wretches cry
They're heard no more.

Ariel: O bid your faithful Ariel fly

O bid your faithful Ariel fly
To the farthest Indies sky
And then at thy afresh command
I'll traverse o'er the silver sand.
I'll climb the mountains, plunge the deep,
I like mortals never sleep,
I'll do your task, whate'er it be
Not with ill-will, but merrily.

Ariel: Come unto these yellow sands

Come unto these yellow sands
And there take hands.
Foot it featly here and there
And let the rest the Chorus bear.

Chorus:

Hark, hark, the watchdogs bark

Hark, hark, the watchdogs bark.
I hear the strain of Chanticleer.

Ariel: While you here do sleeping lie

While you here do sleeping lie,
Open-eyed conspiracy his time doth take.
If of life you keep a care,
Shake off slumber and beware,
Awake, awake!

Soprano: Ere you can say come and go

Ere you can say come and go,
Or breathe twice or cry so so,
Each one tripping on his toe
Will be here with mop and mow.

Soprano:

Merrily, merrily shall I live now

Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the
bough.

JC Bach *La Tempesta*

Recitative

No, non turbati, o Nice; io non ritorno
A parlarti d'amor: Sò che a te spiace:

Basta così: vedi, che il ciel minaccia

Improvvisa tempesta: alle capanne
Se vuoi ridurre il gregge, io vengo solo
Ad offrir l'opra mia; che? non paventi?

Osserva, che a momenti
Tutto s'oscura il ciel: che il vento in giro
La polve innalza, e le cadute foglie.

Al fremer della selva, al volo incerto
Degli augelli smarriti, a queste rare,

Che mi cadon sul viso umide stille,

Nice, io preveggo... ah, non te'l dissi,
o Nice?

Ecco il lampo, ecco il tuono: Or che farai?

Vieni, senti, dove vai? Non è più tempo
Di pensar alla greggia. In questo speco
Riparati frattanto, e sarò teco.

Aria

Ma tu tremi, o mio tesoro!
Ma tu palpiti cor mio!
Non temer; con te son io,
Nè d'amor ti parlerò.
Mentre folgori, e baleni
Sarò teco, amata nice:
Quando il ciel si rassereni,
Nice ingrata, io partirò.

No, be not mov'd, my Nice: I do not come
to speak to thee of love: I know that you
are sorry:

That's enough: Thou feel'st how all
around the sky
threatens a sudden storm: haply thy flock
thou'lt gather to thy fold; I only come
to proffer thee my aid. How? Fear'st thou
not?

Observe how I speak.
E'en now the sky is clouded, and the wind
In eddies blows the dust, and the fall'n
leaves.

By the trees' hollow murmur, by the birds,
that here and there in wild amazement
fly,
and by the few big drops that on our
cheeks
are falling, I forsee... Ah, said I not, o Nice?

Here is the lightning, here is the thunder:
What now?

Whither goe'st now? 'Tis no time
to think of thy flock. In yonder cave
Shelter thyself awhile, and I'll stay with
thee.

But thou tremblest, O my fair!
Still thou pantest, O my soul!
Fear not, I will still be near,
nor of love will I speak.
While lightnings slash, and thunders roll,
Nice belov'd, I here remain:
Soon as the sky is calm again,
ungrateful Nice, I will go.

Recitative

Siedi. Sicura sei. Siedi, e respira
Ma tu pure al mio fianco
Timorosa ti stringi?
Ah cada il cielo,
Non dubitar, non partirò.
Bramai sempre un sì dolce istante.
Ah così fosse frutto dell'amor tuo,
Non del timore.
Ah lascia, o Nice, ah lascia lusingarmene
almen.
Chi sa? M'amasti sempre forse fin'or.

Fu il tuo rigore modestia, e non
disprezzo.
E forse questo eccessivo spavento
e'pretesto d'amor.
Parla, che dici m'appongo al ver? Tu non
rispondi?
Abbassi vergognosa lo sguardo?
Arrossisci, sorridi intendo, intendo;
Non parlar mia speranza;
Quel riso, quel rossor dice abbastanza.

Aria

E pur frà le tempeste
La calma ritrovai:
Ah non ritorni mai;
Mai più sereno il dì!
Questo de giorni miei,
Questo è il più chiaro giorno:
Viver così vorrei,
Vorrei morir così.

Cantata by Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782)

Sit, my fair angel, sit, and freely breathe.
Yet still, with fear o'ercome,
thou knitt'st thy hands in mine.
Ah, though the sky should fall
fear me not, I will not stir.
I have longed for so sweet a moment.
Ah, so it was the fruit of your love,
not fear the cause.
Ah, let, o Nice, ah let me hug awhile the
dear delusion.
Yet who knows? Perhaps thou still hast
lov'd me
and what I for scorn complain'd of was
but maiden modestly
and coy reverse. And haply this excels of
fear is but the cloak
with which thou hid'st thy love? What
say'st thou?
Speak, presum'd I right?
Thou'rt silent, and to earth
declin'st a bashful look!
Thou blushest now! Thou smilest!

Thus 'mid the tempest's roar
a heartfelt calm I've found.
Ah! Would the fun return no more
unclouded here to shine.
This in my days' whole round,
this was my brightest day decreed;
E'en thus my life to lead
e'en thus to die by mine.

*Translation by Thomas Le Mesurier
Mesurier, T., 1795, Translations chiefly from
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2024-25

We love to hear your feedback. Here's what you said about our last concert, Handel's *Messiah*, in December.

Possibly the best *Messiah* I've been to (out of quite a few!).

The concert was beautiful – particularly the choir – for such a small choir the quality was outstanding.

The pre-performance talk was much better than usual: the presenter was useful and the speakers spoke clearly enough to be understood.

Disappointed to see almost an entire audience of sheep follow the daft tradition standing for the Hallelujah chorus. Just because George I did is no excuse 280 odd years later.

Thank you for a brilliant concert, a wonderful continuation of Christopher Hogwood's legacy. I had huge respect for this group and they were important in my musical development as a harpsichord student from Australia nearly 50 years ago. This was a tightly and thoughtfully woven performance.

I attended with a group of 12 friends. We go to the *Messiah* every year and a number said that this was the best ever.

Keep an eye out for our post-concert survey email, and tell us what you think about this evening's concert.

Bojan Čičić

director & violin



Croatian-born violinist Bojan Čičić has established himself as one of the leading names on the early music scene, as both a soloist and music director.

As well as Leader of Academy of Ancient Music, he directs ensembles including De Nederlandse Bachvereniging, Dunedin Consort, Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and Phion Orkest van Gelderland & Overijssel. As a soloist he has performed with AAM, Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, Kioi Hall Chamber Orchestra Tokyo and Orquesta Barocca de Sevilla.

Bojan formed his own group, the Illyria Consort, which explores and specialises in lesser known repertoire of the 17th and 18th centuries. Illyria Consort's debut album of Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli: Sonate da Camera on Delphian Records received great critical acclaim and won Presto Recordings of the Year Award in 2017 and, in collaboration with Marian Consort, *Adriatic Voyage* won the same award in 2021. The same year saw the release of *Pyrotechnia* featuring Italian virtuoso violin concertos by Vivaldi, Tartini and Locatelli ('a thrilling musical discovery', *Classical Music Daily*).

In 2022, Illyria Consort released the first ever complete recording of Johann Jacob Walther: Scherzi da Violino ('enviously spontaneous and carefree', *Gramophone*), as well as an album of Christmas instrumental music titled *La Notte* ('One for every December!', *BBC Music Magazine*).

Bojan's recording of JS Bach: Sonatas and Partitas was nominated for the Critic's Choice 2023 in *Gramophone* and Editor's Choice in *BBC Music Magazine*. He will be recording JS Bach Violin Concertos with AAM this year, and works for violin and piano by the 19th-century Croatian virtuoso-violinist Franjo Krežma.

In 2016, Bojan was appointed Professor of Baroque Violin at the Royal College of Music, and is passionate about training the next generation of instrumentalists in historically informed performing styles.

Anna Devin

soprano



Irish soprano Anna Devin has gained recognition across the world for her work in the baroque and classical repertoire, particularly her interpretation of Handel's heroines.

This season's highlights include Haydn's *Paukenmesse* with Vladimir Jurowski and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem* with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under David Hill, and Haydn's *Creation* at the National Concert Hall, Dublin, under Peter Whelan. On the opera stage, she joins

Irish National Opera to sing Héro in *Beatrice and Benedict* conducted by Ryan McAdams.

In recent years Anna's successes on the opera stage have included Melissa in *Amadigi* with Garsington Opera; Almirena in *Rinaldo* with Glyndebourne on tour and Michal in *Saul* in Paris Théâtre du Châtelet; the title role Calisto in David Alden's iconic production and Celia in *Lucio Silla* in Madrid under Ivor Bolton.

Anna's concert career has seen her travel worldwide, and most recently she has given time to developing her chamber music and recital programmes and this season she makes her recital debut at Bechstein Hall.

Her recordings include *La bohème* for Signum with Irish National Opera, *Arminio* and *Faramondo* from the International Händel Festspiele Gottingen; Mozart in London, *Il re Pastore* and *Mitridate, Re di Ponto* with Classical Opera for Signum Classics; and 'Arias for Benucci' with Arcangelo for Hyperion.

Anna Devin is an alumna of the Royal Opera House's Jette Parker Young Artist programme and is proud to be an Ambassador for the British Dyslexia Association.

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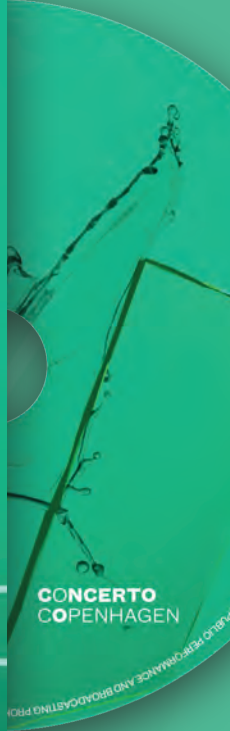
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