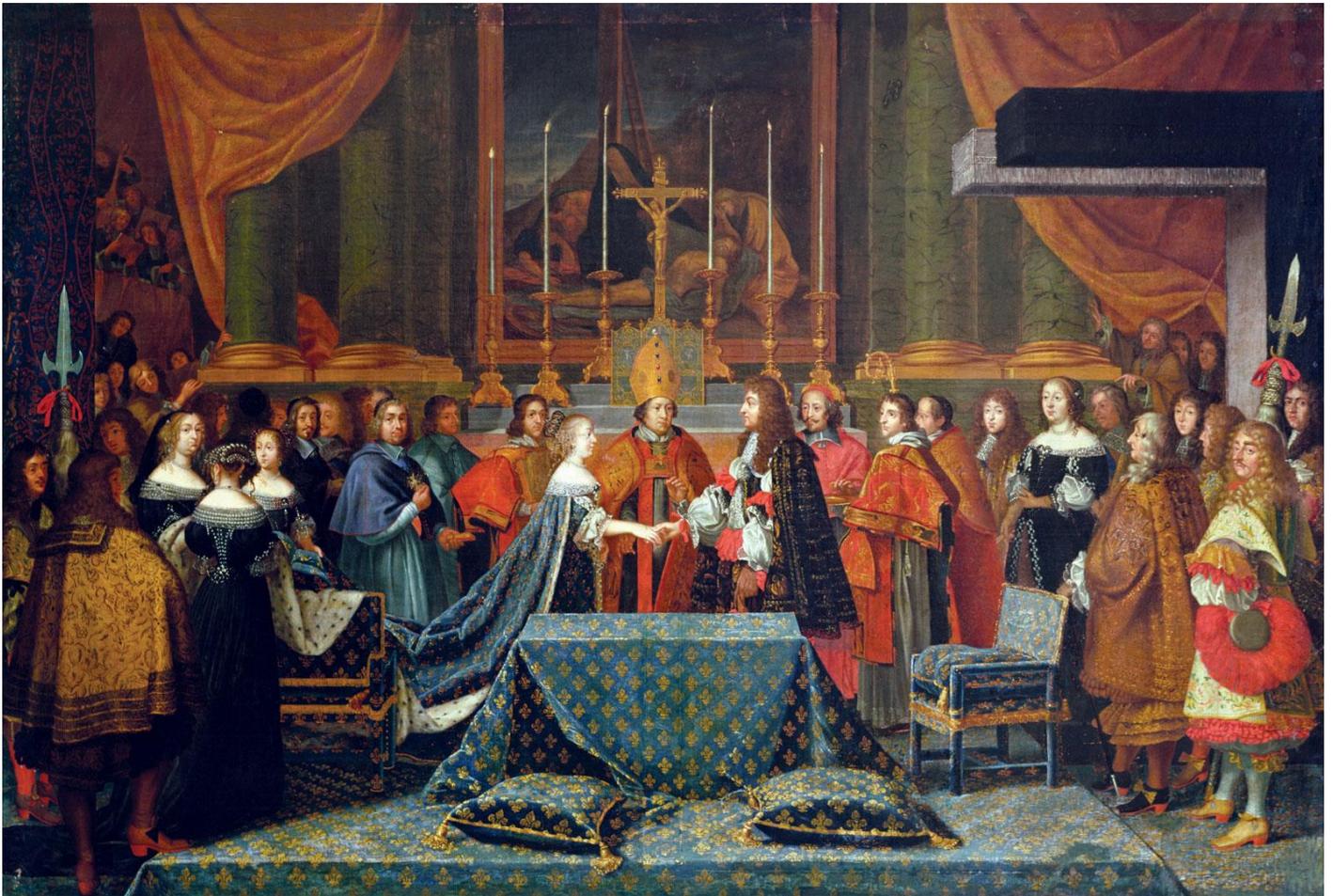


Tafelmusik

FOUR WEDDINGS, A FUNERAL, AND A CORONATION

Program Notes
by Charlotte Nediger

Music is an integral part of the celebration of important life moments in most cultures, and this is particularly true of rites of passage. This week we offer a selection of music written by baroque composers for the celebrations of royal weddings, a coronation, and for the funeral of a renowned French marshal.



Jacques Laumosnier, *Wedding of Louis XIV of France, June 9th 1660.*

LULLY BALLET DE XERXES

Louis XIV was born in 1638, ascending to the throne just five years later upon the death of his father. His mother, Queen Anne, ruled as his regent, alongside Cardinal Mazarin as chief minister. Even before Louis reached the age of majority in 1651 (at age thirteen!), and long before he took control of the reins of government upon the death of Mazarin in 1661, Anne had determined that Louis would marry her niece.

Maria Theresa was the daughter of Anne's brother, Philip IV of Spain, and her marriage to Louis would not only bring an end to the war between the two countries, but would prove to be essential to future foreign policy. Negotiations of the marriage were lengthy and complex, but eventually successful. Maria Theresa was married by proxy to Louis in Fuenterrabia, before being escorted to the border in 1660, where she was met by Louis and his court. They were married at Saint-Jean-de-Luz on June 9. Several weeks later, on August 26, they made the traditional Joyous Entry into Paris. The wedding itself would have been an understated affair, the grander celebrations reserved for Paris. Mazarin declared that he would not hesitate to "*jetter l'argent par les fenêtrés*" (throw money out the window) in order to impress all of Europe. He commissioned the building of a new theatre in the Tuileries, and asked the renowned Italian composer Cavalli to write a new opera (*Ercole amante*) for the festivities. In fact, neither the theatre nor the opera was ready in time. In its stead, Cavalli's opera *Xerxes* was performed in a temporary theatre, altered in order to incorporate ballets set to music written by Louis' court composer, Jean-Baptiste Lully. The ballets proved more popular with the French public than the Italian opera, and it is a short selection of these dances that we are performing this week. We have taken the liberty of including the Chaconne from *Roland*, written by Lully and performed at Versailles 25 years later, in 1685. In the opera, the chaconne represents the celebration by the people of the marriage of their princess, so seems a fitting addition.

Louis and Maria Theresa seem to have had an amicable marriage for the first year or so, and a son and heir (Louis, Grand Dauphin) was born in 1661. Five subsequent children died in infancy. Maria Theresa seems to have quietly tolerated Louis' various mistresses. Apart from occasionally having to act briefly as regent during Louis' absences on military campaigns, she had little to do with the politics of the court. When she died in 1683, Louis famously said, "This is the first time she's given me any trouble."

PURCELL SYMPHONY AND AIRS FROM ODE "FROM HARDY CLIMES"



Lady Anne was born in 1665, during the reign of her uncle Charles II. Her father James, Duke of York, was heir presumptive, as Charles had no legitimate children, but James's Roman Catholicism was cause for concern. Charles ensured that Anne and her older sister, Mary, were raised as Anglicans. Mary married William of Orange in 1677: Charles had favoured a union with the Dauphin Louis to cement a French coalition, but Parliament opposed a Catholic union. In choosing a husband for Anne, Charles turned to Prince George of Denmark, younger brother of King Christian V. The Danes were Protestant allies of the French, and Louis XIV was keen on an Anglo-Danish alliance in order to contain the power of the Dutch. Anne's father was likewise keen to diminish the influence of his son-in-law, William of Orange, who vehemently opposed the match.

Thankfully, the political match led to a strong and supportive marriage. Anne and George were wed at the Chapel Royal on July 28, 1683. George had arrived at Whitehall on July 19, "to make his address to the Lady Anne." Whether Purcell's "From hardy climes" was performed on the occasion of his arrival, or on the wedding day itself, is not known, but

that it was commissioned of Purcell by the royal family is clear. It opens with the text "From hardy Climes and dangerous Toils of War, where you for Valour unexampled are [...] hail, welcome Prince, to our benigner

isle. [...] Wake then, my Muse, wake Instruments and Voice / To celebrate the Joys of such a choice." To offer a taste of Purcell's ode, we will be performing the opening symphony, as well as the instrumental airs that precede the songs and choruses.

Anne of course went on to become Queen Anne, with George as her Consort — though not until the reigns of her father James, sister Mary, and brother-in-law William came to an end in 1702. Purcell had written several birthday and welcome odes for Charles, James, and Mary, but this is the only ode he had the opportunity to write for Anne. His last royal ode, however, was written for the sixth birthday of her son, Prince William, Duke of Gloucester, in 1695. Seventeen pregnancies in as many years had led to only five liveborn children for Anne and George, and of those William was the only one to survive infancy, but he was sickly and tragically died at age eleven. Upon George's death in 1708 Anne was left to grieve — and reign — alone, the last of the Stuart monarchs.



BLOW ANTHEM "GOD SPAKE SOMETIME IN VISIONS"



Anne's father, the Catholic Duke of York, assumed the throne upon the death of his brother, Charles II, in 1685, as James II of England and Ireland, and James VII of Scotland. The coronation was a truly splendid affair. James commanded that all be done "that Art, Ornament, and Expense could do to the making of the Spectacle Dazzling and Stupendious." We are fortunate that a remarkably detailed and elaborately illustrated document of the ceremony was written by Francis Sanford. It includes details of the music performed, with no fewer than nine anthems by Henry Purcell, John Blow, William Child, Henry Lawes, and William Turner. There were significant alterations to the order of service: a Catholic king and his queen were being crowned by the Church of England, and James requested that the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Sancroft, eliminate the communion service altogether, and abridge the rest. One of the resulting innovations was a musical one: the addition of an anthem to be sung during the homage

at the end of the king's portion of the coronation. The anthem in question was to be a setting of part of Psalm 89, "God spake sometime in visions," and was newly composed by John Blow. Written for eight-part choir with string orchestra, it was performed again at the coronation of George II in 1727.

James II's reign was to be a short one. When he produced a Catholic heir, parliamentarians and nobles called on his Protestant son-in-law William of Orange to invade, resulting in the so-called Glorious Revolution in 1688. James fled England, and his eldest daughter Mary and William III claimed the throne. James spent the rest of his life in exile at the court in France.

PACHELBEL CANON & GIGUE

In planning this program, we couldn't help but think of the music we had included at our own weddings, and of the many weddings at which we had played as young musicians. The Pachelbel Canon is one of the most requested classical pieces at weddings, and so we briefly leave the European courts for a taste of music played at modern Canadian celebrations. Pachelbel himself was known to have played at a Bach family wedding (he was a friend of J.S. Bach's father) — who knows, perhaps they played the Canon!

The Canon was composed during Pachelbel's student years in Vienna. His teacher, Johann Schmelzer, and fellow student, Heinrich Biber, were violinists and key figures in the development of the south German school of violin playing. Inspired by their work, the keyboard player Pachelbel wrote two collections of chamber music for violins, including the now infamous Canon. Despite its apparent simplicity and natural beauty, it is in fact a masterful example of a strict contrapuntal canon, all presented over a ground bass. Each violinist plays exactly the same part, the second violinist starting one bar after the first, and the third starting one bar after the second. The continuo players repeat the same eight notes throughout. In its original scoring for three solo violins and continuo the Canon is also a delightful display of virtuosity. It was originally paired with a lively Gigue, which is easy to imagine as a joyful recessional.

CHARPENTIER *MESSE DES MORTS*, H.10



From 1688–1698, Marc-Antoine Charpentier was *Maître de musique* at the principal Jesuit Church of Saint-Louis in Paris. The church was built by the Jesuit architects Étienne Martellange and François Derand on the orders of Louis XIII in the first half of the seventeenth century. It is a magnificent church, modelled after the Gesù in Rome but incorporating French elements, and was considered the embodiment of the Counter-Reformation. It was renowned for the splendour of its liturgy and of its music.

The Duke of Luxembourg, François-Henri de Montmorency [*pictured left*], was a French general, named Marshal of France in 1675. He was a successful if at times brutal general, victorious at key battles with William of Orange in the War of the Grand Alliance, charged with command of the French army in the Spanish Netherlands. The king was not always enthusiastic about his behaviour — he had questionable morals at best — but made good use of his military prowess.

Luxembourg died at Versailles in January 1695, attended at his death by a Jesuit priest. His funeral service was held in Paris at Saint-Louis three months later, on April 21, and the church was elaborately decorated. A detailed description was printed in the *Mercure galant*: the entire church was draped in black, but in such a way as to not hide ornaments and gilding Luxembourg's coat of arms was mounted, as were large escutcheons interwoven with batons of the Marshal of France. A magnificent catafalque, more than 20 feet high, was erected in the middle of the church, with panels depicting his greatest victories, and topped with four large marble statues, representing Fame, Power, Glory, and Victory. Four lions were placed at the foot of steps rising to these statues, and on the steps 120 candlesticks, and four girandoles, each with two dozen candles.

The music written for the occasion was Charpentier's *Messe des morts*, and it was performed "by a great

number of the best musicians in Paris.” One can only imagine the effect of hearing this beautiful mass in such a remarkable setting.

HANDEL *IL PARNASSO IN FESTA*

Il Parnasso in festa, per il sponsali di Teti e Peleo (Parnassus in celebration of the nuptials of Thetis and Peleus) was a *festa teatrale*, a musical entertainment written by Handel as part of the celebrations of the marriage of Anne, Princess Royal, and Prince William of Orange in 1734. Handel enjoyed the patronage of the royal family throughout his career in England, and had a particularly close relationship with the Princess Royal, who supported his opera seasons, and was a capable musician herself. Handel taught lessons to her and her sisters, and she was clearly his favourite pupil.

Anne was the second child and oldest daughter of George II. In 1725, when she was sixteen, a proposal of marriage from Louis XV was rejected when the French insisted that Anne would have to convert to Catholicism. She had to wait another eight years before the next proposal, this time from a suitable Protestant Royal, William IV, Prince of Orange-Nassau. They were married on March 14, 1734 in the Chapel Royal at St. James’s Palace. Handel composed the anthem for the wedding, at Anne’s request, and set to a text of her choosing. The night before the ceremony, the royal family and their courtiers attended the premiere of *Il Parnasso in festa* at the King’s Theatre in the Haymarket. A full three-act work, it was performed in costume in front of a single backdrop, probably with little or no staging. An additional five performances were given for an enthusiastic public.

The set of the serenata represents Mount Parnassus, where Apollo and the muses have gathered to celebrate the wedding of Prince Peleus, a mortal, to Thetis, a sea nymph. Orpheus is among the guests, inspiring an array of arias celebrating love and music. We close our concerts this week with the Overture to *Il Parnasso* as well as the final chorus, “May this celebration ignite the heart.”

Anne and William’s marriage was by all accounts a relatively happy one, despite her rather imperious temperament. William’s popularity with the Dutch public did not extend to Anne, who served as regent for her young son William V, but she worked tirelessly, successfully consolidating reforms introduced by her husband. She invited Handel to The Hague in 1750, an invitation he was happy to accept.

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