

## SOUND THE TRUMPET!

### Program Notes

By Charlotte Nediger

With this week's concerts we usher in the festive season with a musical journey through baroque Europe. We begin our travels in Versailles, with music written to be played at a dinner party hosted by Louis XIV on January 16, 1707 (true "musique de table," or "Tafelmusik"! ). The extant score, copied by the King's music librarian, credits **Jean-Baptiste Lully fils** as composer — the second son of the famed court composer of the same name. A posthumous account states that Jean-Baptiste Jr. "knew hardly anything about music," and that he was given the position of Surintendant de la musique du roi only "out of consideration for his father's talent." It is entirely possible that all he contributed to the various compositions credited to him was his name. The 1707 suite for the king's dinner may well have been written by Michel Richard de Lalande, the composer who "shared" the job of Surintendant with Lully fils. Elisa Citterio has selected a few movements from this charming suite to open our concert.

We travel south to Rome, the birthplace of the concerto grosso — works for string orchestra that contrast a small solo group (called the "concertino," or "little consort") with the full orchestra (the "ripieni," meaning "padding or stuffing"). Corelli's final publication was a carefully prepared selection of twelve concerti grossi, his Opus 6, and quickly became famous throughout Europe. Shortly before the publication appeared, the young violinist **Pietro Antonio Locatelli** arrived from Bergamo to study in Rome with Corelli and his followers. Locatelli's first publication mirrored Corelli's last: a set of twelve concerti grossi in a format and style that pays homage to the master. This is particularly evident in the eighth concerto: just as Corelli had done in the eighth concerto of his Opus 6, Locatelli adds an optional Christmas pastorale. The opening of the concerto is rich and sombre, with divided viola parts and in the dark key of F minor. The sun comes out in the lilting F-major pastorale.

Shortly after the release of his Opus 1, Locatelli travelled north through Germany, taking posts in various cities and performing as a virtuoso violinist. He may well have encountered Telemann and Fasch, and it is to these composers we turn now. **Georg Philipp Telemann** stated that he was not a fan of the purely virtuoso solo concerto, and indeed we find that most of his concertos are more “conversational” than “exhibitionist,” and that many feature more than one solo instrument. He also turned to instruments not always featured in solo roles, such as the viola, often overshadowed by the more brilliant violin. Telemann clearly understood the viola’s inherent qualities, and opens his Concerto for two violas with a movement labelled “avec douceur” (“with sweetness”).

**Johann Friedrich Fasch** and Telemann met as students at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, and although Fasch was younger by only seven years, he nonetheless considered his “most beloved” friend to be his mentor. Like Telemann, Fasch favoured the more “collegial” concerto. His trumpet concerto clearly features the solo trumpet, but the soloist is amply supported in musical “conversations” with two oboes and with the accompanying strings.

We return to France and encounter **Michel Corrette**: born in Rouen, he enjoyed a long career in Paris, writing music of a light nature, much of it arrangements of popular tunes of the day. Among these are numerous arrangements of Christmas carols. The publication “Six Symphonies en Quatuor” bears the subtitle “containing the most beautiful French and foreign Noël’s,” and the instruction that they can be played by a chamber group or full orchestra, in concert or at a church service. The first Symphonie is comprised of arrangements of four traditional French carols: “When Christmas arrives,” “The king of heaven has just been born,” “Here is the solemn day,” and “Adam was a wretched man.”

We cross the channel to England, but with a musical detour to Iberia. Organist and composer **Charles Avison** directed a concert series in his native Newcastle, establishing a broader reputation through his writings on music, and through his publications of sonatas and concertos. Among his most popular publications was a set of twelve concerti grossi consisting of arrangements for string orchestra of harpsichord sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti. Scarlatti wrote over 500 harpsichord sonatas while employed at the royal courts in Lisbon and Madrid. A few dozen of these sonatas were published in London and enjoyed great popularity, inspiring Avison’s

arrangements. Each of Scarlatti's sonatas is a single-movement work, so Avison combined them to create four-movement concertos. There are relatively few slow movements in Scarlatti's keyboard oeuvre, so Avison had to get creative. He claimed that several slow movements were drawn from a manuscript of Scarlatti sonatas that only he had seen, but the truth is that most of the slow movements were composed by Avison himself. In the Fifth Concerto, the opening Largo is of Avison's invention, and the remaining three movements are arrangements of Scarlatti sonatas K.11, K. 41, and K.5.

After discovering all these new treasures, we return home, musically speaking, to familiar ground with **Johann Sebastian Bach** and the Second Brandenburg Concerto. Like his friends, Telemann and Fasch, Bach liked the idea of the ensemble concerto, and explored it in his collection of concertos dedicated to the Margrave of Brandenburg titled "Six concerts avec plusieurs instruments." The variety of instrumentation in these concertos is their trademark feature, and the solo group of the second concerto is the most disparate: trumpet, recorder, oboe, and violin. Particularly noteworthy is the uncommonly brilliant trumpet part, written for a trumpet in F. All of Bach's trumpet parts are demanding, but most are written for trumpets in C and D. Bach obviously had a trumpet player capable of playing the solo passages in the higher key of F, but already by the middle of the eighteenth century such players were rarities. A copy of the score by C.F. Penzel made c.1760 suggests substituting a horn and transposing the part down an octave. A later copy suggests a flute, and 20th-century performances have substituted various instruments, among them clarinet, piccolo-heckelphone, and soprano saxophone! We are delighted to have David Blackadder join us to perform Bach's original scoring.