

UMC Concert Series

presents

THE LONDON EARLY MUSIC GROUP

JAMES TYLER, Director

GLEND A SIMPSON, Mezzo-soprano
ALAN LUMSDEN, Flute, Recorders
OLIVER BROOKES, Bass Viol
PETER TRENT, Tenor Viol, Lute
JAMES TYLER, Lute, Baroque Guitar, Mandola, Flute

Aria, Non così tosto io miro	Claudio Monteverdi
Canzona, La Robbata	Floriano Canale
Aria, Si dolce è il tormento	Claudio Monteverdi
Sonata à 2	Giovanni Paolo Cima
Aria, Clori ancora è fanciulla	Francesco Cavalli
Canzona	Girolamo Frescobaldi
Cantata, La Gelosia	Luigi Rossi
Lute Solos, Toccata-Canzon	Girolamo Frescobaldi
Aria, Se l'aura spira	Girolamo Frescobaldi

Intermission

Motet, Exulta filia Sion	Claudio Monteverdi
Sonata à 3	Giovanni Paolo Cima
Aria, Ohimè ch'io cado	Claudio Monteverdi
Ballo	Gasparo Zannetti
Aria, Piangete occhi dolenti	Francesco Cavalli
Canzona, La Grimanetta	Giovanni Battista Riccio
Baroque Guitar Solos, Preludio-Ciaccona	Francesco Corbetta
Aria, O leggiadri occhi belli	Giovanni Stefani
Aria, Bella mia, questo mio core	Giovanni Stefani

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Italy was the birthplace of baroque music. It was from Italy and by the hands of Italian composers and their disciples that the experiments and innovations to dominate European fine-art music for the next several centuries were disseminated. Oddly enough, this influence was a novelty for Italian musicians, who had been dominated themselves by the oltremontani (those from the other side of the mountains)--the French and the Netherlanders--for most of their music's recorded history. The concern of the sixteenth-century Italians for both the theater and the artistic conventions of Classical Greece as well as developments in their popular music and the ceremonial sacred music of Venice precipitated the new baroque style, which is agreed to have flourished between approximately 1580 and 1750.

According to the music historian Palisca, "If there is any common thread that unites the great variety of music that we call baroque, then, it is an underlying faith in music's power, indeed its obligation, to move the affections." What is more, the expression of human passions through music was the primary motivation for the pioneers of the new style and was especially prominent in vocal genres, such as the contemporary madrigal and early opera. The choice of topics and texts reflects the baroque attitude as strongly as the music written for them does, and inspection of the texts of tonight's representative sampling of early baroque Italian music confirms this. The topics are those of heightened human emotion, primarily the yearning, anguish, and exhilaration of physical love. The use of language is similarly pointed. Instrumental music, although free of text and subject to its own traditions, was also brought into line with the new thinking.

Towering above his peers and a major force among them was Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), who in his prime served as maestro di cappella at the Cathedral of San Marco in Venice. Educated in the rigorous methods of the Renaissance, he led the way into the new musical era by synthesizing the old with the new and by mastering both sacred and secular forms. He was especially admired in his own time, as he is today, for his astonishing ability to capture human emotions in music and to reveal the dramatic potential of music. This rare talent is evident in his more intimate pieces as well as his works on the grand scale. His first opera Orfeo (1607) is a landmark of musical expression. It is not to minimize the efforts of others to bring the first flowering of baroque music in Italy into perspective by a focus on the music of this illustrious composer.

Notes by Michael J. Budds

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Aria: Non così tosto io miro

The moment I look at you I forget
all the pains love inflicts upon me.
No longer am I able to sigh
or bemoan my tearful state.
If only to see you can make one so happy,
how fortunate will be the one who will kiss you.

Aria: Si dolce è il tormento

So sweet is the torment of my heart
that I am content to suffer it for your cruel beauty.
Hard and pitiless as you are,
my love will stand like a rock before your scorn.
Only in the harbor of heaven shall I find rest,
healing with the arrow of death
the wound pierced in my heart by the arrow of love.
May deceitful hopes, pleasure, and peace desert me,
may my adored tormentor deny me grace.
My faith will live amid endless sorrow and hopes unfulfilled.
Even if no fire of love ever warmed your frigid heart,
which showed no pity for the soul you enslaved,
one day you may repent, and grieve, and pine for me.

Aria: Clori ancora è fanciulla

Clori's still a child who has much to discover.
That's why she'll not encourage a lover.
Proud and wasteful.
If I were young and pretty like her, it stands to reason
I'd have plenty of lovers for every season.
Ladies, it's madness.
You more than any, who won't be loved by many,
I wish that Love would once more turn his feet
so that our paths may meet.
There'd be less then for you who are much too proud
to trap more lovers.
And then I'd hear you say that you were lonely.
It's more than stupid, it's mad to give yourself to one man only.
Woe begone, silly wretches! Unworthy of your beauty,
because you make your whole heart into a prison only just for one.
So divide you heart, so divide it into twenty,
then you'll have less to try you, and joy in plenty.
Ten in a day I think should satisfy you!
Behave as I advise you while Spring still beautifies you,
while you, the season flying to its close,
decks you with lily and rose,
do not refuse any lovers; for you'll repent,
and spend your old age in sobbing.
But, if you love for pleasure and enjoyment,
you'll give pleasure to many, and sweet employment.

Cantata: La Gelosia

Jealousy, which creeps serpent-like into my heart,
do not enter where burns the fire of true love;
true love never chills, never, never.
What do you want of me? Perhaps you wish me to cease loving!
Fury of my soul! Cease to torment me! No more!
Depart from me, Jealousy, depart!
But cruel, you remain quietly at the gates of my heart.
Flee, flee from me. Love is stronger than your icy chill.
What do you want of me? I am happy with my thoughts.
My soul's fury, constrain me not. No, no, no!
Leave me, Jealousy, depart, depart!

Aria: Se l'aura spira

When the breeze blows softly
the fresh rose smiles,
The shady emerald green hedge
fears not the summer's heat.

Dance, come and dance merrily,
delightful nymphs, flowers of beauty.
Now the clear wandering stream
flows from the mountain to the sea.

A bird unfolds his sweet song
and a little tree is blossoming.
A beautiful face in the shadows
looks forth only with pity.
Sing, smiling nymphs,
scatter the winds of cruelty.

Aria: Ohimè ch'io cado

Alas, that I fall once more,
and with fresh tears
shall water my withered hopes.
In my heart I still bear
the traces of the love
which pierced its armor.
Foolish that I was
in believing that I was safe
against the attack of the naked archer.
I felt secure, as a proud warrior,
and now am unable to sustain
the flattened blow of a single look.
My pride is receding,
my arms are like fragile glass
against a diamond sword.
How cruelly love can punish a feckless soul;
a sweet word, a gentle face,
a comely glance can put a heart
in chains once more.
Eyes, you beautiful eyes,
if virtue and beauty are still one,
do not deny me a smiling look,
so that my prison may be my heaven.

Aria: O leggiadri occhi belli

O beautiful eyes, my dear eyes,
living rays from the clear
and cloudless sky,
Since you desire to see me languish,
to see me die,
beautiful eyes which I adore,
behold, I die.
O serene eyes, O beloved eyes,
which so desires such cruelty to my heart;
Since you feel such joy, that one who
loves and adores you dies in flames,
Turn back your gaze, behold such ardor.

Motet: Exulta filia Sion

Rejoice, O daughter of Zion,
give praise, O daughter of Jerusalem.
Behold thy King, the Holy One,
behold the Saviour of the world cometh.

O all ye people, clap your hands,
rejoice in God in the voice of triumph.
Let the heavens rejoice,
let the earth be glad.

For the Lord hath comforted his people,
he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

Aria: Piangete occhi dolenti

Cry then, eyes in your sorrow.
Nature echo my crying.
Weep then, weep too, you flowing fountain.
Let not your voice be silent.

You woods cry out in protest
at my anguish so bitter.
You silent watchers hear me,
raise your voices,
And tell them in pity,
tell them who pass this way.
How woeful my fate is, oh anguish
to endure another's betrayal.

Softly let Procne and Philomel
respond to my sad lamenting.
Softly sing to my song a descant
and sadly, sadly end it.

Aria: Bella mia, questo mio core

My beautiful one,
this my heart for you lives
And for you dies; my destiny,
my life, and my death depends on you.

O new miracle of love,
life and death I prove at once;
I do not know which is more welcome,
whether death, or life.

Still in doubt I live,
if I am dead, or if I am alive;
But so it is that Fate would have it,
my life and death are in your hands.