Theatrical Concerti: Comedy, Delight, and Drama

Carla Moore, guest director and violin • Suzanne Nance, narrator

Friday March 13, 7:30pm
Saturday March 14, 7:30pm
First Baptist Church

Sunday March 15, 3:00 pm
Kaul Auditorium, Reed College

The Orchestra
Carla Moore, guest director and violin
Rob Diggins, principal 2nd violin
Jolianne Einem, violin
Toma Iliev, violin
Adam LaMotte, violin and viola
Janet Strauss, violin
Courtney Kuroda, violin
Victoria Gunn, principal viola
Hillary Oseas, viola
Joanna Blendulf, principal violoncello
and viola da gamba
Annabeth Shirley, violoncello
Curtis Daily, contrabass
Jonathan Oddie, harpsichord
David Walker, theorbo and guitar

Pre-concert talk
Carla Moore, guest director and violinist, will discuss the music on today's program.

Pietro Antonio Locatelli (1695–1764)
Introduttione teatrale in G Major, Opus 4, No. 4
I. Allegro
II. Andante, sempre piano
III. Presto

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767)
Ouverture Burlesque in B-flat Major, TWV 55:B8
I. Ouverture
II. Scaramouches
III. Harlequinade
IV. Columbine
V. Pierrot, viste
VI. Mezzetin en Turc

Marin Marais (1656–1728)
Pièces de Viole, Cinquième livre, Suite No. 7 (1725)
I. Le Tableau de l’Operation de la Taille
(Operation for the Removal of a Stone)
II. Les Relevailles (The Convalescence)
Joanna Blendulf, viola da gamba; Suzanne Nance, narrator

G. P. Telemann
Gulliver Suite for Two Violins in D Major, TWV 40:108
I. Intrada
II. Lilliputsche Chaconne (Chaconne of the Lilliputians)
III. Brobdingnagische Gigue (Gigue of the Brobdingngians)
IV. Reverie der Laputier, nebst ihren Aufweckern (Daydreams of the Laputians and their attendant flappers)
V. Loure der gesitten Houhnhnms & Furie der unartigen Yahoos
(Loure of the well-mannered Houyhnhnms & Wild dance of the untamed Yahoos)
Carla Moore and Rob Diggins, violin; Suzanne Nance, narrator

Lorenzo Gaetano Zavateri (1690–1764)
Concerto Teatrale in F Major, Opus 1, No. 9
I. Allegro a Spico
II. Larghetto alla francese
III. Presto

INTERMISSION
P. A. Locatelli
Introduttione teatrale in D Major, Opus 4, No. 5
I. Allegro
II. Andante, sempre piano
III. Presto

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)
Concerto in A Major for Violin and Three Violins per eco in lontano, RV 552
I. Allegro
II. Larghetto
III. Allegro
Carla Moore and Rob Diggins, violin

Giovanni Antonio Guido (c. 1660–after 1728)
Scherzi Armonici sopra Le Quattro Staggioni dell'Anno
Le Printemps (Spring)
I. Le temps vole, La nuit (The time flies; The night)
II. Chaque saison se suite (Each season follows one another)
III. Le ruisseaux, Les oyseaux (The stream; The birds)
IV. Musette

L’Esté (Summer)
I. Zephire desparoit (Zephyrus, the West wind, disappears)
II. Chant des coucous (Song of the cuckoos)
III. Un violent orage (A violent thunderstorm)

L’Automne (Autumn)
I. Celebrons le retour de l’automne (Let us celebrate the return of Autumn)
II. Sommeil (Sleep)
III. La chasse, Fuite du cerf, Mort du cerf (The hunt, Flight of the stag, Death of the stag)
IV. La chasse (The hunt continues)

L’Hyver (Winter)
I. La saison des frimats (The season of fogs)
II. Le cruel aquilon nous declare la guerre (The cruel North wind declares war on us)
III. Bannisons la tristesse (Let us banish sadness)
IV. Laissons gronder les vents (Let the winds scold us)
Suzanne Nance, narrator
Program Notes

Toda y we venture into the theatrical (disreputable, improper, ribald!) world of burlesques, divertimentos and scherzos — genres considered outside the bounds of serious music by eighteenth century composers. The word burlesque derives from the Italian burla — a joke or mockery, sometimes even a grotesque. In theatrical use, a burla was a comic interlude or practical joke introduced, usually improvised, into a performance by the masked characters of the Commedia dell’Arte. Whether it be a burlesque, an Introduttioni teatrale, or theatrical introduction, or Scherzi Armonici, musical divertissements, the works you are about to hear depict elaborate comedic or dramatic scenes or share colorful theatrical titles.

Pietro Antonio Locatelli’s Introduttioni teatrali appear in his Opus 4 of 1735. It is unclear whether they actually served as musical introductions to operas, ballets or plays, or were simply created as a type of burlesque. All six adopt the fast-slow-fast movement plan of the Neapolitan opera overture, and their instrumentation is that of the concerto grosso. In these pieces however, the soloists group almost always play in unison with the ripieno (reinforcing) group, with only small windows of real solo opportunity. Locatelli’s first movements all open with vigorous fiery rhythms that seem ideally suited to capturing the attention of a theater audience – rapid scales, broken chords, and double stops. The Allegro openings of Opus 4/4 and 4/5 provide vivid examples of these startling energetic attacks. The middle movements are generally in a minor key and provide a contrasting affect, while still providing some bold harmonic clashes. The final movements return to the excitement of the opening, but now in triple meter and in binary dance form. These same characteristics are found in the Concerto Teatrale by the Bolognese composer, Lorenzo Zavateri. Like Locatelli, his style is harmonically rich and often capricious, with unusual melodic turns, broken chords strewn across all parts, and double stops.

Little is known about the time, place or occasion for which Telemann’s Ouverture Burlesque was composed, since the work was not published during his lifetime. The piece begins with a formal theatrical overture, with the usual dotted figures in the opening section, followed by a light-hearted imitative fast section and a concluding return to the opening music. Telemann then treats us to a succession of Commedia dell’Arte portraits. He begins with the cowardly braggart known as Scaramouche who is given a rather swaggering processional, with comical leaps in the melody answered by unison dialogues. The clever and agile servant Harlequin follows with a short and vigorous gavotte-like dance. Harlequin’s frequent love interest, the servant girl Columbine, is presented in a romantic and dreamily lilting triple meter. The sad clown Pierrot, who is usually pining away for Columbine, is treated to a surprisingly quick and aggressive theme — perhaps he is meant to be angry at losing Columbine once again? The whole piece closes with Mezzetin, whose character is based upon the vindictive Brighella, here acting the part of a Turk in a galloping movement full of spinning folk-like motives and burlesque dissonances.

In France, the taste for burlesque expressions in music has its roots both in the popularity of the Italian Commedia dell’Arte in that country, as well as in the French fascination with character pieces. In the preface to his fifth book of Pièces de Viols (1725), Marin Marais states that “since character pieces are received favorably today, I have judged it appropriate to include several.” The most notorious of these is the “Le Tableau de l’Operation de la Taille” in which he guides the listener through the horrors of an 18th-century operation for the removal of a urinary bladder stone (the piece has traditionally, but inaccurately, been known as “The Gallbladder Operation”). In the original viol part the composer provides detailed textual explanations of the procedure which are graphically depicted by appropriate musical passages. It is thought that Marais himself may have undergone such an operation, and he follows the piece with a cheery (and thankful) “convalescence.”

Telemann’s Gulliver Suite for Two Viols is based on the book by Jonathan Swift, Gulliver’s Travels. Rather than focusing on the political and ironical nature of the satire, Telemann instead focuses on the amusing story and its characters. Describing the adventures of Lemuel Gulliver, a surgeon and sea captain, Telemann depicts each of the four voyages where Captain Gulliver meets with strange creatures inhabiting far off lands. Often these descriptions are more easily seen on the page by the musicians than heard by the audience. The Lilliputische Chaconne, usually a majestic extended dance in ¾ time, is performed depicting the tiny Lilliputians (less than 6 inches tall!) with teensy note values in the violin parts.

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prefacing it with a dream/vision sequence that Orlando experiences at the hands of the sorcerer Zoroastro. Orlando has rescued Angelica (a pagan princess) during a battle, and has fallen deeply in love with her. However, Angelica is already in love with someone else. Orlando's inability to be with her has driven him to madness, and Zoroastro is the only person able to stop Orlando from causing catastrophic damage to everyone around him.

Interestingly, Orlando was the last opera role that Senesino sang for Handel. Part of their falling-out may have had something to do with the lack of da capo arias in the show (only three). Usually, a large number of da capo arias gave the singer opportunities to showcase vocal fireworks. Another factor may have been the madness of Orlando. Senesino was renowned as a bad actor, with many instances of fabulous reviews for his singing and equally poor reviews of his acting. Being asked to stretch his skills to show the many facets of madness may have bruised his ego!

I hope you enjoy this evening’s performance, and that hearing a contralto voice sing these roles has whetted your appetite for more!

—Dr. Vicki St. Pierre

The Brobdingnagische Gigue describes the island of giants, where the shortest note value is a whole note rather than the usual 16th note. In the flying island of Laputa, his third voyage, the inhabitants all have one eye pointing inward and one pointing upward. They are so lost in thought that they must be reminded of life’s daily tasks by servants who flap them with inflated bladders. The final movement is a visit to an island inhabited by the noble Houhnhnms, a race of highly rational and benevolent horses who must share their country with the wild, filthy and greedy Yahoos. The Houhnhnms attempt to maintain their nobility with a stately Loure while the Yahoos cavort around them.

In 1740, Prince Frederick Christian of Poland visited Venice and the Ospedale della Pietà where Vivaldi taught and composed for much of his life. In March of that year, the Prince attended a concert in his honor where he heard some of Vivaldi’s most prized young students. Among the pieces they performed was the *Concerto in A Major for Violin and Three Violins per eco in lontano*, RV 552. The unusual title, *per eco in lontano*, refers to the group of three violinists that form the echo choir, apart from the solo violin and ripieno group. This choir of violinists, placed theatrically in another part of the hall, refers to the famous tradition of spatially separate choirs in San Marco. Throughout the three-movement work, the interplay between the solo violin and the echo choir is evident and forms the basis for Vivaldi’s expressive range, texture and use of violinistic color. Each solo gesture of the solo violin is enhanced by its repetition sounding in the distance by the echo choir.

Giovanni Antonio Guido was a Genoese-born violinist and composer who spent nearly all of his professional life in musical service to the French Duke of Orleans. His *Scherzi arminici sopra la quattro stagioni dell’anno* were published at his own expense in Versailles, but unfortunately without any indication of date. It would be hard to imagine that his set of ‘Four Seasons’ was not inspired by Antonio Vivaldi’s verifiably famous *Quattro Stagione* of 1725, which were very popular in France and a known favorite of King Louis XV. Following Vivaldi’s lead, Guido provides an explanatory poetic cycle along with the music, and here we find the comparable references to murmuring streams, singing birds, stormy winds, stag hunting, and shivering cold. But Vivaldi is much more deliberate in linking his musical ideas to the provided sonnets, even writing his text directly into the performing parts. Guido’s four poems, *Les Caracteres des Saisons*, are longer and more formal in style, and show an overriding philosophical concern for the inevitable passing of time and the decay of all living things. Guido also has a greater variety of movements in his ‘Seasons’ and he includes a number of movements that are not directly connected to the programmatic content of the seasons themselves. For this concert program, we have elected to focus on the movements that, like Vivaldi’s collection, stay true to the most picturesque elements of each season.

—John Dornenburg and Carla Moore