A Tale of Two Cities

The Aulos Ensemble

Christopher Krueger, flauto traverso and recorder
Marc Schachman, baroque oboe
Linda Quan, baroque violin
Myron Lutzke, baroque cello
Arthur Haas, harpsichord

Guest Artist Series
Katzin Concert Hall | January 23rd, 2016 | 7:30 P.M.

Program

Suite from The Fairy Queen
Hornpipe
Rondeau
Prelude from Act II
Prelude from Act I
Prelude from Act III
Dance for the Haymakers
Chaconne: Dance for the Chinese Man and Woman

Concerto a Quattro in D minor
Adagio-Allegro-Largo-Allegro

Trio-Sonata in G minor, Opus 2, #8
Andante-Allegro-Largo-Allegro

Chaconne from Terpsicore (HWV 8b)

INTERMISSION

3ème Concert Royal
Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande grave
Gavotte
Musette
Chaconne

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)
Handel
Handel
François Couperin (1668-1733)
Suite from *les Fêtes d’Hébé*  
Jean-Philippe Rameau  
(1683-1764)

Menuets  
Air gracieux pour Zéphire et les Grâces  
Air tendre, Air pour le Génie de Mars, La Victoire  
Musettes  
Rigaudons  
L’Hymen, Chaconne

Notes for A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Charles Dickens’ iconic novel is set in two of Europe’s greatest cities at a time when unrest and turmoil dominated the social lives of the populace. Throughout this tumult some of the finest composers of the 18th century wrote chamber music of the highest order. Unlike Dicken’s eponymous novel, our program presents not revolution but rather musical gems of the Baroque—works from London and Paris that showcase a diversity of style and inventiveness that move us to this day.

The foremost composer of restoration England, Henry Purcell has been called the greatest setter of English words that ever lived, and although he incorporated Italian and French stylistic elements into his compositions, his voice was unique and considered to be quintessentially English. *Fairy Queen*, one of his most famous compositions, is described as a masque or “semi-opera” and is based on Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, though the libretto was not by Shakespeare. Written in 1692, the score is his longest for the theatre, and includes an overture, some symphonies, numerous dances, songs and entr’actes. The instrumental work are some of his finest and most familiar. His original orchestration included pairs of recorders, oboes, trumpets, and drums along with a string and continuo group. We’ve assembled a group of these “greatest hits” for our opening selection, arranging them for our Ensemble.

George Frideric Handel was one of western music’s first superstars. His music’s endless variety and inspiration resulted in a wide ranging career, first in his native Germany, then in Italy where he went to study and realized his first great successes, and finally in London where he became the most famous musician of his day. Writing in all the international styles prevalent at the time, he was afforded acclamation from patrons, critics, and audiences alike wherever his works were performed. The works on tonight’s program illustrate his versatility.

The Chaconne from *Terpsicore* (HWV 8b) must have been one of Handel’s favorite pieces judging from the number of times that it appears in his various compositions. Tracing the different versions gives us insight into his processes for assembling compositions and his imagination in seeing things in different contexts. In 1734 Handel revised his *Il Pastor fido* (HWV 8c) adding to it a suite of dances taken from his *Parnasso in festa* (HWV 73) written earlier that year. The result was *Terpsicore*, written for a dance troupe led by the great ballerina Marie Sallé, as a new prologue to the opera. It is this version in A major which we’ve used for
this recording. In Handel’s earlier version, the dance is set as a chorus, also in A major, complete in and of itself but with a four-part chorus overlaid on the dance music, much in the same way Bach reset parts of his First Brandenburg Concerto into a cantata. Handel wrote the piece at least one other time—as part of the Trio-Sonata Opus 5, no. 4, (HWV 399) in G major where he also recycled other movements from Athalia and Il Pastor fido. Although published in a collection of trio-sonatas, Handel outfitted this work with the added viola part from his other versions. It is interesting to note the inconsistencies among the 3 versions—accidentals and even phrase lengths vary from one to another. For our performance we have substituted a flute for one of the two oboes, and expanded and contracted our forces at different times from that of a trio-sonata texture to one approximating the orchestral versions—however we’ve left out the chorus.

Handel’s instrumental chamber music presents far greater challenges in dating and authenticating than his operas and oratorios. The trio-sonata on our program, Opus 2, no. 8 in G minor (HWV 393) first appeared in an edition under the imprint of Jeanne Roger of Amsterdam around 1730. Winton Dean, the noted Handel authority, speculates that this was a bootleg edition as the sonatas were printed a few years later with the correct title page by John Walsh (Handel’s frequent publisher) in an edition in 1733. The dates of composition however were probably earlier—they were likely written between 1717 and 1719, while Handel was at Cannons. These sonatas are all written in the 4 movement sonata da chiesa form with pairs of movements (slow-fast, slow-fast), often linked by half-cadences with the third movement written in a different key. The Walsh title page mentions “violins, flutes, or oboes” which was typical of the time. Many of the sonatas go outside the range of the 18th-century woodwinds but the G minor sonata (HWV 393) fits the compass of the baroque oboe perfectly, and we perform it with this instrumentation.

The Concerto a Quattro in D minor has been attributed to Handel but its authorship cannot be verified. Along with its companion piece in D major it was discovered in a manuscript entitled “2 Concertos par le sieur Händel” in a private music library of the Count Schönborn at Weisentheid-Unterfranken in Bavaria by the musicologist Fritz Zobeley. Regardless of its origin, the D minor Concerto, with an obbligato cello part at once virtuosic in the second movement and expressive in the third, is a lovely work and a valuable addition to the mixed chamber music of the period. Curiously, the first movement closely resembles that of Handel’s G minor oboe concerto (HWV 287) with its dotted figures in the violin and cello, over which the solo flute plays a melody complete with Italianate ornamentation.

The greatest master of this period in France was François Couperin. (le grand) who supervised the musique de la Chambre for Louis XIV during the later years of his reign, presiding over concerts in which the softly persuasive tones of the harpsichord and flute—chamber instruments par excellence were mixed with the survivors of the Grande Bande (violin) and Grande Ecurie (oboe) to produce the characteristically refined and elegant style of the eighteenth-century French music on this program. Couperin stated, “I would rather be moved than astonished.” His was the voice of the rococo, an ultra-refined, aristocratic style in with the heroic scale of the earlier baroque was cut down to size, and a premium was placed on a find of sweet intimacy of expressions best savored in the salons and private chambers of the nobility. Couperin organized Sunday afternoon chamber music recitals for Louis, at which only the most accomplished virtuosi in the King’s very large musical establishment were allowed to appear. In 1722, the
composer gathered several of the pieces that had found special favor at these *Concerts Royaux* into 4 suites, the 3rd of which we offer tonight. In the preface he explained that, although he had laid the music out on a two-staff score so that a harpsichordist could perform it unassisted, it would nevertheless sound best if rendered the way it was originally intended: by flute, oboe, violin, and others taking turns selecting those pieces that suited them best, and carefully adjusting their style of performance to the kind of soft flattery with which one entertains a kind and his company.

Jean-Philippe Rameau, one of the musical giants of 18th-century France, is known today primarily for his compositions for harpsichord. His “formal” chamber music is limited to the 1741 collection of pieces for flute, violin, or viola da gamba and harpsichord, which is a staple of the baroque chamber music literature. During his lifetime, however, Rameau’s enormous reputation was made in the field of opera, and it is from that body of works that we choose our final selections. Many of these masterpieces remain unknown today, while a favored few have been resurrected by adventurous opera companies, or more typically, brought to the attention of today’s audiences through orchestral performances of the dazzling instrumental dances they contain. Rameau’s oeuvre attracted no less a musician than Camille Saint-Saens, who compiled the first and only “complete edition” of these great works. Recent musicological investigations have brought to light a variety of original 18th-century sources, including the print on “short scores” (reductions on 2 staves as if written for solo keyboard) of the opera suite on tonight’s program. The source for “Les fêtes d’Hébé” found in the library in Berkeley at the University of California offers the inspiration for our performing versions. “Les fêtes d’Hébé” is not a complete story, and as its subtitle (“Les Talents Lyriques”) suggests, deals with the triumph of poetry, music and dance. We have chosen some of the most evocative airs and dances from the opera to form our suite, striving for maximum variety of instrumental color and effect.