

Affetto Programme for Tauranga September 15th 2019

1. Jubilate Deo – J.V. Meder
2. Fantasia “Faire wether” – John Mundy
3. Tombeau – le sieur de St. Colombe
4. L’Automne – Boismortier

INTERVAL

5. Polyphème – Clerambault
6. *Drive the cold winter away* 16th English
7. *Gia risonar d’intorno al campidoglio io sento* (from *Ezio*) – G.F. Handel

William King, baritone

Peter Reid, cornetto and baroque trumpet

Polly Sussex, violas da gamba and cello

Rachael Griffiths-Hughes, harpsichord

Storms, violent winds, gentle rain, searing heat, whether conjured by Mother Nature, various gods and demi-gods or the supernatural, were an important source of inspiration for composers of the 17th century. It wasn't just Vivaldi and Haydn who took the weather as a starting point for a composition. In today's programme, we will explore some dramatic pieces of music that take the weather as a starting point, and we also celebrate some of the gods and monsters who created some of these dramatic events.

Jubilate Deo

Johann Valentin Meder (1649-1719)

Meder was employed as a singer in many courts in the northern part of Germany, what is now Sweden and Latvia. In Lübeck he met Buxtehude, whose influence can be heard in this setting of the *Jubilate Deo*, through the inventive and varied use of musical textures. Fanfare-like passages give way to rhapsodic, improvisatory sections, which are followed by rhythmic, Italianate dance-like figures. The text is a setting of Psalm 100: a general song of praise for everything that God has given.

Fantasia – Faire wether

John Mundy (1555-1630)

from “The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book”

This short piece, describing a ‘four seasons in one day’ scenario was composed for the virginals: a rectangular keyboard instrument with plucked strings, like a harpsichord, that was popular with women, including Elizabeth I, in 16th century England. Mundy held a doctorate from Oxford University and was organist of both St. George’s, Windsor, and Westminster Abbey during his career. His music is represented in *The triumphs of Oriana*, a book of madrigals compiled in 1601 for

Elizabeth I, and the Fitzwilliam Virginal book, the most important collection of 16th and early 17th century English keyboard music.

Tombeau le Sieur de Sainte-Colombe (le fils) (unknown, fl. 1699-1713)

This one movement work from a longer Suite of pieces was written as a tribute to his father, the more famous Sainte-Colombe, who appeared as the teacher of Marin Marais in the movie, *Tous les Matins du Monde*. The *Tombeau* was particularly popular with French composers and this one is exceptional in its length and for its allusions to the journey of the soul across the River Styx in the Underworld of the ancient Greeks. The only surviving copy is a manuscript in the library of Durham Cathedral in Northern England.

Automne from Les Quartres Saisons Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1689-1755)

Boismortier was known as a hardworking and industrious composer who produced and published a lot of music in a variety of musical genres. The 4 cantatas which make up his 'Quatre Saisons' are each scored for a different voice type: Autumn is for the baritone. The text suggests that the season is occupied entirely with the harvest, making and drinking of wine. Bacchus, the God of wine, is present in all the movements. As in all such works of this time, recitative and aria are alternated, creating a narrative and then an emotional response. All the dramatic devices used in the operatic music of the time can be found in the cantatas, such as . . .

INTERVAL

Polyphème (1710) Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749)

Clérambault was a celebrated organist/composer who held the esteemed position of organist of Saint-Sulpice, Paris, and also at institution responsible for the welfare of poor daughters of the nobility (similar to Vivaldi at the Ospedale in Venice). It was in this latter role that he developed the French secular cantata, a genre for which he was, and is, considered a master. The 25 surviving cantatas are mostly based on Greek or Roman myths, as is this one, telling the story of Polyphemus the cyclops, and his jealous love for Galatea. The cantatas were often performed for Louis XIV, who, according to Evrard Tilton du Tillet, "heard them with pleasure." Scored for solo voice and continuo only, Clérambault gives to the baritone a depth of expression that allows dramatic virtuosity. The contemporary critic Daquin stated that Clérambault "had found songs and expressions that belonged only to him and make him regarded as the only true model."

Recit: Polyphemus, troubled, in love and jealous,
Was seeking lovely Galatea.
The impetuous winds and agitated sea
Seemed to share his anger.

“Come,” he cried, “harsh Nereid, come through your charms, calm my terrible trouble,
Share the true flame of my loving heart.”

Aria: Ah! Grant me your presence,
Come, clam the violence of my fire and of my torments,
Far from you everything causes me despair.
I fear that a bold rival may enjoy moments that are too sweet.

Recit: But I call her in vain, it is Acis she loves.
Let me punish him for his happiness.
He offends me and still breathes,
He triumphs and I suffer a living pain,
Let us quench with his blood the fire that consumes me.

Aria: Avenge me of this fatal conqueror,
Jealous despite, terrible hatred,
Banish love from my heart.
Come, fly, break my chains!
Sacrifice a beloved rival, then his death may calm my fears,
And that the object that has charmed him
Be given over to eternal tears.

Recit: The terrible son of Neptune thus expressed his torments,
When barbarous fate offered to his anger two faithful lovers.
Of a rock that crushes him, Acis is the victim:
With the name of Galatea, Acis dies:
Polyphemus, jealous, congratulates himself on his crime,
But he is soon punished by his love.

Aria: Jealous lovers, break your chains
When nothing pleases your ardour.
Sometimes in taking revenge for your suffering,
You redouble its harshness.
The death of a rival who knows how to please
Crushes the object of your vows.
If you satisfy your anger, love is the unluckier for it.

Drive the cold winter away

English 16th century

This carol first appear in print in 1625 and was popular in Elizabethan England. The lyrics speak of how the delights of Christmas festivities (sitting by the fire, gathering with neighbours, drinking ale, singing and eating) can distract from the miseries of winter.

Gia risonar d'intorno al campidoglio io sento (from Ezio)

G.F. Handel (1685-1750)

During his long career in London writing both opera and oratorio, on many occasions Handel matched the trumpet with the baritone: these timbres lending themselves well to military, triumphant, celebratory and dramatic themes. This particular opera was first performed in 1732, but received only 5 performances, making it Handel's least successful opera. One valuable, long-term

relationship to come of this work was that between Handel and the celebrated bass Antonio Montagnana, for whom this aria, and many after, was written. In this aria, he was described as having “a voice like a cannon.”

Around the Capitol I can already hear the warlike clamour of countless voices. What shall I do? I shall go, and let my heart be prompted by my debt as a friend and my duty as a subject.

AFFETTO

Praised as ‘inspired programmers’ by Metro Magazine, early music ensemble *Affetto* were formed in 2010 to explore the lesser known chamber music of the Baroque and Renaissance. The Italian word *affetto* means mood, emotion or affect, and is both the name of the ensemble and the main objective of the players, to take the audience on a rollercoaster of ups and downs, from plaintive to passionate, from serene to sensual.

With soprano Jayne Tankersley and theorbo player Philip Griffin, *Affetto* undertook a Chamber Music NZ tour, and have recorded a CD of Italian and Spanish music, as well as having given numerous concerts throughout the country. Polly Sussex and Peter Reid from Auckland, and Rachael Griffiths-Hughes from Hamilton are core member of *Affetto*. They all studied their instruments in New Zealand and overseas, and now perform with many different ensembles, and teach.

For this programme they are joined by hot property Will King - the tone of his rich, resonant voice and his effortlessly crafted musicianship will stay with you long after this concert. Will was the winner of the 2018 Dame Malvina Major Wellington Aria Competition, and since graduating from Wellington NZ School of Music in 2018 is working this year for NZ Opera as an Emerging Artist. Will is also a member of Voices NZ Chamber Choir and the NZ Youth Choir. Will would like to acknowledge the continued support of the Dame Malvina Major Foundation.