DUNEDIN CONSORT

7 September 2024
St Andrews



Alexander Chance sings Vivaldi

Matthew Truscott director

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PROGRAMME

Antonio Vivaldi Bassoon concerto in B-flat major, RV 503

František Ignác Antonín Tůma Per labra nectar bibitur

Jan Dismas Zelenka Lamentation II for Easter Eve, ZWV 53

Jan Dismas Zelenka Concerto à 8 concertanti in G major, ZWV 186

Antonio Vivaldi Sonata à 4, "al Santo Sepulcro", RV 130

Antonio Vivaldi Stabat Mater, RV 621

Alexander Chance countertenor

Matthew Truscott director and violin

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Programme Note

Eighteenth-century Vienna was one of the great hubs of Europe, its gravitational pull drawing in a constant stream of composers, performers, artists, and thinkers. All three of this programme's composers took up opportunities for study and salaried employment in the city across their variously storied careers.

By far the most famous of the three, **Antonio Vivaldi** (1678–1741) was in demand across Italy in Venice, Rome, Milan, and Mantua—where he wrote *The Four Seasons*—and abroad. He received commissions from the French court and Emperor Charles VI in Vienna. The strength of the last connection was such that the Holy Roman Emperor knighted Vivaldi and invited him to Vienna. He took up this invitation in 1740 but Charles VI died soon after his arrival. Left without that patronage and financial support, Vivaldi was soon in financial difficulties and died in comparative poverty at the age of 63.

Given his late arrival in the city, the works we hear this evening come from his time in Italy. This **Bassoon concerto in B-flat major, RV 503** is one of an astonishing thirty-nine that Vivaldi wrote for the instrument. In making the bassoon the soloist, he put centre stage an instrument more often left as part of the continuo team in that period—his are the first surviving examples of concertos for bassoon. Two faster movements, both demanding virtuosic agility from the soloist, frame a plangent Largo that revels in the bassoon's beauty in sustained playing.

Like Vivaldi, **František Ignác Antonín Tůma** (1704–1774) died in Vienna. Born in Bohemia, he had a long career as a court musician in Vienna, ending up as *Kapellmeister*, or director of music, for the widow of Emperor Charles VI. ***Per labra nectar bibitur*** is really a trio that delights in weaving voice, violin, and viola together. Tůma sets one of the very many texts in praise of the Virgin Mary used most often in the service of Vespers. In this case, rather than a plea to Mary in her capacity as, say, saver of shipwrecks or Queen of Heaven, the anonymous author simply takes pleasure in the mouthfeel of Mary's name. As with so much Marian poetry, it more than blurs the line between sacred and erotic.

Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679–1745) studied in Vienna and Venice but found his longest employment in Dresden. Although he never officially rose to the post of *Kapellmeister* at the Dresden court and seems to have gone relatively unappreciated by employers in courts and chapels, his reputation among fellow musicians and composers, including JS Bach and Telemann, was strong. Another Bohemian, he is perhaps best-known today for his extraordinary writing for woodwind players. His six sonatas for two oboes and bassoon are notable for their creativity and fiendish difficulty, perfect examples of his idiosyncratic approach to harmonic language and instrumentation. We find the same creativity and affinity

for woodwind in his set of six ***Lamentations*** for Holy Week. To close the first half, we hear the last of the set, and the second for Holy Saturday, in which he deploys a quartet of alto voice, violin, oboe, and bassoon as the solo lines.

Jeremiah's Lamentations are the writings of a prophet pushed beyond his limits, distraught at the state of all he sees around him. His sense of desolation and deep desire for Jerusalem to turn back to the Lord fit well with the liturgical and narrative progress of Holy Week. As had become standard practice for composers across Europe, Zelenka sets the letters of the Hebrew alphabet as decorated *vocalises*. Fossilised in the Latin text of the Vulgate, they serve as headings for each of the bible verses. Like the first letter of an illuminated manuscript, these fleeting movements contain a superabundance of artistry—the sweeping lines over the motoric bassoon for Daleth are particularly extraordinary.

The second half begins with Zelenka's **Concerto à 8 concertanti, ZWV 186**. This is another shifting and intriguing work that manages to be almost three pieces in one across its three movements, with an opening that suggests it might be an oboe concerto before a bassoon-led slow movement and a driving finale. A minor epic, Zelenka shows his skill and imagination in sharing musical shapes and ideas across the entire ensemble.

To the close the programme, we return to Holy Week, this time in Italy. The ***Sonata à 4 al Santo Sepulcro*** has a very clear purpose in the trajectory of the week, coming at the point on Holy Saturday when the three Marys go to the tomb to anoint the body of Christ with oils and instead find the tomb empty. Although clearly for church use, there is a strong sense of theatre and discovery as the two movements unfold.

The medieval text of the Stabat Mater takes us back a day earlier, to Good Friday. Here, the author begins by describing Mary, the mother of Jesus, standing at the foot of the cross and weeping for her son. Through the course of the poem, the perspective shifts as the intensity of Mary's emotion transfers to the author, culminating in an impassioned plea to be allowed to share in both her sorrow and her love. Vivaldi's setting, **RV 621**, is his earliest dateable vocal work, receiving its first outing in Brescia in 1712, written before his famous association with the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice. Here, he picks up the traditional approach of earlier hymn-like, strophic settings that change the words over a repeated melody. The music of the first three movements is repeated for the second three movements, before the new material comes with the altered perspective of the poem for the seventh and eighth movements. The piece concludes with a tumbling and fugue-like Amen that lands, at the last, on a glowing F major chord, the final reward for the pains of the preceding movements.

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Text and Translations

František Ignác Antonín Tůma Per labra nectar bibitur

Per labra, nectar bibitur,
cordique vox alliditur,
Maria, quinque litteris
in cor meum dum mitteris.
Cum nomen hoc reduplico,
Maria amari supplico,
ut me tibi despondeas,
amare me respondeas.

Si Virgo mecum vixeris,
si cor meum confixeris,
amore factus ebrius,
dicam Mariam crebrius

Through the lips, the nectar is drunk,
And the voice is dashed in the heart,
Maria, while with five letters
you are sent into my heart.
Since I repeat this name,
I beg to be loved by Mary,
that you promise yourself to me,
that you return my love.

If you have lived with me, Virgin,
If you have pierced my heart,
made drunk by love,
I shall say Maria more and more often.

Jan Dismas Zelenka Lamentation II for Easter Eve, ZWV 53

Aleph: Quomodo obscuratum est aurum,
mutatus est color optimus,
dispersi sunt lapides sanctuarii in capite
omnium platearum.

Aleph: O how the gold is tarnished, how
altered is that gold so fine!
The stones of the temple lie scattered at the
head of every way.

Beth: Filii Sion inclyti, et amicti auro primo:
Quomodo reputati sunt in vasa testea,
opus manuum figuli?

Beth: The sons of Zion, honourable and
decked with finest gold, how have they been
reckoned like earthenware pots, the work of
the potter's hands?

Ghimel: Sed et lamiae nudaverunt mammam,
lactaverunt catulos suos:
filia populi mei crudelis,
quasi struthio in deserto.

Ghimel: The very jackals give the breast, and
suckle their young:
but the daughter of my people has grown
cruel like the ostrich in the desert.

Daleth: Adhaesit lingua lactentis ad palatum
eius in siti:
parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui
frangeret eis.

Daleth: The suckling baby's tongue has stuck
to his palate for thirst,
little children begged for bread; and no one
spared any for them.

He: Qui vescebantur voluptuose, interierunt
in viis:
qui nutriebantur in croceis, amplexati sunt
stercora.

He: Those who used to eat only the best lay
dying in the streets;
those who were reared in purple clawed at
the rubbish heaps.

Vau: Et major effecta est iniquitas filiae
populi mei peccato Sodomorum,
quae subversa est in momento,
et non ceperunt in manus ea.

Vau: The sin of my people has outdone
that of Sodom, which was overthrown in a
moment, without time for a man to wring his
hands.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad
Dominum Deum tuum.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, turn to the Lord your
God.

INTERVAL

Antonio Vivaldi Stabat Mater, RV 621

1.
Stabat Mater dolorosa
iuxta crucem lacrimosa
Dum pendebat Filius.

2.
Cuius animam gementem
Contristatam et dolentem
Pertransivit gladius.

3.
O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater unigeniti!

Quae moerebat et dolebat,
Pia Mater, dum videbat
Nati poenas incliti.

4.
Quis est homo qui non fleret,
Matrem Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio?

5.
Quis non posset contristari,
Christi Matrem contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio? 6.

6.
Pro peccatis suae gentis
Vidit Iesum in tormentis,
Et flagellis subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem natum
Moriendo desolatum
Dum emisit spiritum.

7.
Eja Mater, fons amoris
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

8.
Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum
Ut sibi complaceam.

9.
Amen.

1.
The grieving Mother
stood beside the cross weeping
as her Son was hanging.

2.
Whose soul, groaning,
sad and sorrowful,
the sword pierced through.

3.
O how miserable and afflicted
was that blessed
mother of an only son.

She lamented and grieved,
the Holy Mother, when she saw
the pains of her glorious Son.

4.
Who is there who would not weep
were they to see the Mother of Christ
in such distress?

5.
Who would not feel compassion
at the thought of Christ's Mother
grieving with her Son?

6.
For the sins of his people
she saw Jesus subjected to
torments and lashes.

She saw her sweet Son
dying, deserted
as he gave up his spirit.

7.
So, Mother, fount of love,
make me feel the force of your grief
so that I may mourn with you.

8.
Make my heart burn
with love for Christ the God
so that I may be reconciled with him.

9.
Amen.

Biographies



Matthew Truscott

Matthew Truscott is a versatile violinist who shares his time between period instrument music and 'modern' performance, appearing with some of the finest musicians in both fields. He is concertmaster of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and one of the leaders of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. In these roles he has directed orchestral performances from the violin in venues around the world, including Carnegie Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Philharmonie, Vienna Musikverein, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie and at the Royal Festival Hall and BBC Proms in London.

As a guest leader he has appeared with ACO Collective, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, the Budapest Festival Orchestra, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, English National Opera, Dutch National Opera and The English Concert.

Previously a member of the Dante and Quince Quartets, chamber music collaborations have also included projects with Trevor Pinnock, Jonathan Manson, Emmanuel Pahud and most recently Leif Ove Andsnes. Matthew teaches baroque violin at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

After many years guest leading Dunedin Consort, Matthew was appointed as the group's new leader in 2021.



Dunedin Consort

Dunedin Consort is one of the world's leading Baroque ensembles, recognised for its vivid and insightful performances and recordings. Formed in 1995 and named after Din Eidyn, the ancient Celtic name for Edinburgh Castle, Dunedin Consort's ambition is to allow listeners to hear early music afresh, and to couple an inquisitive approach to historical performance with a commitment to commissioning and performing new music. Under the direction of John Butt, the ensemble has earned two coveted Gramophone Awards, a BBC Music Magazine Award, and a Grammy nomination. In 2021 it was the recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society Ensemble Award.

Dunedin Consort performs regularly at major festivals and venues across the UK and abroad, and enjoys close associations with the BBC Proms, Wigmore Hall, Edinburgh International Festival and Lammermuir Festival. Alongside its performance and recording work, Dunedin Consort is committed to a wide-ranging education programme both in schools and in the wider community. In inspiring and encouraging musical participation, developing vocal skills and fostering a love of classical music, historical performance and new music, Dunedin Consort aims to develop and nurture its potential audience and to encourage the performers of the future.

Dunedin Consort is an enthusiastic champion and commissioner of contemporary music, and in recent years has premiered a new set of orchestral dances at the BBC Proms, a new opera by Errollyn Wallen at the Barbican Centre, and new choral music for its a cappella consort. In 2024 it premiered a new guitar concerto by Cassandra Miller for Sean Shibe, the first instalment of a 3-year co-commissioning series which will see further new music by David Fennessy and Tansy Davies.



Alexander Chance

Alexander Chance has worked with many of the leading conductors in the early music world, including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Masaaki Suzuki, René Jacobs, Masato Suzuki, Laurence Cummings, Jonathan Cohen, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Marcus Creed, David Bates and Lionel Meunier. He is in demand as a concert soloist and has given many recitals around Europe, making his recital debut at the Wigmore Hall and Concertgebouw Amsterdam in 2024.

His debut recording, 'Drop not, mine eyes' with lutenist Toby Carr, was named one of Gramophone Magazine's 'Best albums of 2023'. His recent opera roles include Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Britten) for The Grange Festival; Apollo (*Death in Venice*, Britten) for Welsh National Opera; and Tolomeo (*Giulio Cesare*, Handel) for English Touring Opera. Upcoming season highlights include his debut appearance at the BBC Proms, a return to Wigmore Hall with the London Handel Players, and solo recitals with the English Concert and Dunedin Consort.

In 2022, he became the first countertenor to win the International Handel Singing Competition, also winning the Audience Prize.

DUNEDIN CONSORT

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Countertenor	Alexander Chance

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Bass	Hannah Turnbull
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Keyboard	Jan Waterfield

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