

AWAKEN

Music Online for Spring

Saturday 27 March 2021 3.00 pm
NCEM, St Margaret's Church, Walmgate, York

ENSEMBLE AUGELLETTI

Olwen Foulkes *recorders*
Ellen Bundy, Alice Earll *violins*
Elitsa Bogdanova *viola*
Carina Drury *cello*
Harry Buckoke *double bass*
Toby Carr *theorbo*
Benedict Williams *organ*

A SPRING IN LOCKDOWN

Concerto Grosso in F major, op. 5 no. 4
Adagio
Allegro

Francesco Geminiani 1687–1762
after **Arcangelo Corelli** 1653–1713

Sonata in F major, op. 1 no. 1
Largo
Spiritoso
Largo
Affetuoso

John Baptist Grano
c. 1692–before 1748

Sonata in D major, 'Al Irlandese'
Largo cantabile
Allegro

William Corbett 1680–1748

Concerto no. 2 in D major
Allegro
Adagio
Presto

John Baston fl. 1708–39

Trio Sonata in F major, op. 2. no. 4, HWV389 **George Frideric Handel** 1685–1759

Larghetto

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro

Allegro

Dance Suite (from *Il Pastor Fido*, HWV8(b) **Handel**
and *Water Music*, HWV350)

Minuet I & II

[untitled]

Chaconne

John Baptist Grano was a musician at the heart of London's eighteenth-century music scene. A trumpeter, flautist and recorder player, he was brought up on Pall Mall (where his family owned a haberdashery) and was multilingual, speaking English, Dutch, French and possibly Italian. Grano was the principal trumpeter for the opera orchestra at the theatre in the Haymarket where Handel staged his London operas, and a trumpeter for the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards. However, after a financial crash, the closure of the opera, and a plague of smallpox that dissuaded people from large gatherings, Grano was unable to make his books balance, and on 30 May 1728 he was arrested for a debt of £99 and incarcerated in Marshalsea prison in Southwark:

At about 12, the gentry that arrested me came to tell me that if I was not bailed by 5 o'clock that day, they must carry me off to the Marshalsea ... therefore, [I] was brought to this hell between 7&8 at night.

While in prison, Grano kept a journal documenting his daily activities as he attempted to pay for his prison lodgings, buy food and pay off his debts. This astonishing diary is the best surviving account of the infamous London prison, and an extraordinary record of life as a professional musician in eighteenth-century London. A steady stream of musicians visited Grano as he composed, organised concerts, taught and transcribed music from his prison room. For a fee, prisoners were allowed day release under escort, and Grano shrewdly befriended the goaler William Acton who, seeing the high society events that Grano performed at, personally accompanied the trumpeter to work on many occasions.

The violinist **Francesco Geminiani** was another inmate of the prison and his orchestration of Corelli's opus 5 violin sonatas was conceived for a music club similar to the one held at Thurtle's coffee house where Grano was regularly engaged for 5 shillings a night:

When we got to the club, after the consort was open'd (with the overture of Pastor Fido, and entertainment of Mr. Handel's composing) Mr Gethin [countertenor] sang the old song Love would Invade and I accompanied him with the trumpet, and sounded, to my own thinking, better than I have done since I have been engaged in favour of the club. I performed the song part of Genius of England [by Purcell], a solo for the german flute and a concerto I made the day before.

Grano spent much of his time composing music – his diary charmingly describes how he searched for the 'moods' for a concerto commission by 'Mr. Tumulty the Irish Bassoon'. The flute sonata in this programme comes from the only extant publication of his work.

From his self-refurbished prison room, Grano taught trumpet to the son of the opera orchestra violinist **William Corbett**, noting:

[I] ordered him to have his upper teeth filed even and as short as possible, they ... being an obstruction to his wind ... and at the same time desired him to tell his father I wanted a guinea the next time he came.

John Baston, 'Jack, first flute of the old house [Theatre Royal]' was another one of Grano's frequent visitors.

It is likely that Grano played for the first performance of the *Water Music* by **George Frideric Handel**, and Grano composed his own water music suite which he loaned to his brother for a concert on 23 April 1729. Grano also performed the trumpet and recorder in the *Water Music* by an unknown composer in June that year, saying:

Embarked at the Temple Stairs, from whence we went up to Putney and Fulham ... [here] the water music was to come on board their barge ... twas about 9 at night when we began to float back towards London. The music was hardly to be heard there was so great a confusion.

Industrious, dedicated, flirtatious and perhaps better at playing his instruments than organising his events, John Grano finally secured a benefactor, Humphry Parsons, who bailed Grano out of prison on 23 September 1729, after 16 months in Marshalsea, and secured his return to the freedom of 'the life of the living'.

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