



**Bojan Čičić** *violin*  
**Steven Devine** *harpsichord*

***Handel meets Carbonelli***

**Toll Gavel United Church**

**Saturday 25 May 4.00pm**

**Bojan Čičić** *violin*  
**Steven Devine** *harpsichord*

***Handel meets Carbonelli***

Sonata in D major, HWV 371

**George Frideric Handel** 1685-1759

*Affettuoso*

*Allegro*

*Larghetto*

*Allegro*

Sonata I

**Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli** ?1691-1772

*from Sonate da camera, 1729*

*Adagio*

*Andante*

*Largo*

*Allegro*

Sonata in G minor, HWV 364a

**Handel**

*Larghetto*

*Allegro*

*Adagio*

*Allegro*

Sonata IV

**Carbonelli**

*Adagio*

*Andante*

*Largo*

*Presto*

Sonata in G major for solo violin, HWV 407

**Handel**

*Allegro*

Sonata in G major HWV 358

*Allegro*

*Adagio*

*Allegro*

Sonata VI

**Carbonelli**

*Adagio – Allegro – Adagio*

*Allegro*

*Aria*

A programme dedicated to only two composers usually features names that are well known to the audience, pointing out similarities and differences between them, focusing on their influences in their early career and, ideally, wrapping the programme up in a nice conclusion with their most famous work. But, how does one present a programme in which one of the composers is literally unknown, completely forgotten by all but keen enthusiasts of the Baroque era and whose name doesn't recall any particular style in the listener's mind upon hearing their name? Our programme is an attempt to change this lack of information about a composer who was extremely well regarded during his lifetime by performing sonatas from his only surviving work alongside those from the most famous composer on these shores in the eighteenth century.

Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli was born in Livorno and soon embarked on becoming a violinist, firstly as a pupil of Arcangelo Corelli in Rome and later as a violinist in Venice. Antonio Vivaldi even dedicated one of his violin concertos to him in around 1716, when Carbonelli visited Venice to work in an orchestra, probably during the Carnival.

We lose track of Carbonelli for a few years until 1719, when John Manners, 3rd Duke of Rutland offered him an invitation to come to England. This was a period when London, more than any other European city, offered perhaps the most lucrative prospect for young musicians to succeed in their art. Carbonelli soon became the leader of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane orchestra and established himself as a very successful performer and, later, a prolific composer of sonatas, songs and concertos. It's difficult to assess just how prolific he was due to the fact that his only surviving work, *Sonate da camera* published in 1729, is all that is left of his entire musical output. Nevertheless, the sonatas found in this publication are of the highest quality, owing a lot to his former teacher Corelli. Continuing Corelli's musical style in both the fugal and slow movements, they offer the performer a chance to showcase their technique as well as good taste in the ornamentation added to the music.

But what is his connection with Handel? The aforementioned John Manners, Carbonelli's benefactor, proves to be the link. He was the director of the Royal Academy of Music, which commissioned works by, among others, Handel himself. He also paid for the publication of Carbonelli's *Sonate da camera* in 1729. Once the Italian left his position at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane to become a freelance musician in 1728, Handel employed him as a leader of his oratorio orchestras; as late as 1744, Carbonelli came out of his retirement to lead the orchestra in a performance of Handel's oratorio *Deborah*, conducted by the composer himself.

Today, one doesn't think of Handel as an expert on the violin, however it is worth mentioning that his first employment was as a violinist in the court orchestra in Hamburg in 1703, following his training on the violin and on keyboard instruments. One of his earliest sonatas known to us is the sonata in G major, HWV 358, written during his time in Italy. The ending of this sonata features extremely high positions on the violin. One would never associate this kind of violin playing with composers such as Corelli, but Handel's technique must have allowed him to explore these parts of the fingerboard that even Corelli himself wouldn't dare to do.

Preceding this sonata is the *Allegro*, HWV 407, a single movement that exists only in a manuscript written in 1738, which Handel wrote without a bass. We don't know whether his intention was to extend this work to other movements and form a sonata but the way it is preserved seems to work well as a prelude to the Sonata in G major, HWV 358

The Sonata in G minor, HWV 364a comes from a middle point in Handel's career, written in the mid 1720s, when Handel's talent for musical fluency shone through in the arias from his operas of the same period.

Our concert starts with the *Sonata a Violino e Cembalo* in D major, HWV 371, which Handel wrote at the zenith of his career in 1749. It is also the most impressive contribution to this repertory, in which he gives an opportunity for the harpsichordist to shine in equal measure.

This programme features chamber music that could have been performed in various soirées in the houses of the London's nobility, among them the house of the 3rd Duke of Rutland, benefactor of both Handel and Carbonelli. Just imagine the two respected musicians about to perform each other's music in one of those evenings. Steven and I will endeavour to bring one of those evenings to life.

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## **Bojan Čičić**

Croatian-born violinist Bojan Čičić has established himself as one of the leading names on the early music scene, as both a soloist and a music director.

In addition to being the leader of the Academy of Ancient Music, he directs ensembles including De Nederlandse Bachvereniging, Dunedin Consort, Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and Phion, Orkest van Gelderland & Overijssel. As a soloist he appeared with Academy of Ancient Music, Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, Kioi Hall Chamber Orchestra Tokyo and Orquesta Barocca de Sevilla.

Bojan formed his own group, the Illyria Consort, which explores and specialises in lesser-known repertoire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their debut Delphian Records album, *Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli: Sonate da camera*, achieved great critical acclaim and won the Presto Recordings of the Year Award in 2017. Their collaboration with Marian Consort, *Adriatic Voyage*, won the same award in 2021. The same year saw the release of *Pyrotechnia* featuring Italian virtuoso violin concertos by Vivaldi, Tartini and Locatelli.

In 2022, the Illyria Consort released the first-ever complete recording of Johann Jacob Walther: *Scherzi da violino* and an album of Christmas music, *La Notte*.

His recent recording of J.S. Bach's complete Sonatas and Partitas was nominated for the Critic's Choice 2023 in *Gramophone Magazine* and Editor's Choice in *BBC Music Magazine*.

In 2016, Bojan was appointed Professor of Baroque Violin at the Royal College of Music, and is passionate about training the next generation of instrumentalists in historically-informed performing styles.

## **Steven Devine**

Steven Devine combines a career as a conductor and director of orchestral, choral and opera repertoire with that of a solo harpsichordist and fortepianist. He is conductor and artistic advisor of the English Haydn Festival, Music Director of New Chamber Opera, Oxford and Director of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's series *Bach the Universe & Everything*.

On the concert platform he has directed Purcell, Blow, Bach, Handel and Mozart with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; Bach *Easter Oratorio* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales; Haydn, Handel, C.P.E. Bach, J.C. Bach, Ditterdorf and Viotti with the English Haydn Orchestra; Handel, Vivaldi and Porpora with Ann

Hallenberg and Trondheim Barokk; Bach *Christmas Oratorio* with the Norwegian Wind Ensemble; Handel *Solomon* with Victoria Baroque Players, British Columbia and Handel *Music for the Royal Fireworks* with Arion Baroque Ensemble, Montreal. He has also directed programmes with the Academy of Ancient Music, Academie d'Ambronay, the Mozart Festival Orchestra and St Paul's Chamber Orchestra.

Steven Devine's opera repertoire includes works by Purcell, Cavalli, Handel, Haydn and Mozart as well as rarities by Galuppi, Salieri and Cimarosa. His recordings include *Dido and Aeneas* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Sarah Connolly in the title role.

As a keyboard player, he is the principal keyboard player with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and also the principal keyboard player for The Gonzaga Band, The Mozartists and performs regularly with many other groups around Europe. He has recorded over thirty discs with other artists and ensembles and made many solo recordings. His recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (Chandos Records) has received critical acclaim – including *Gramophone* magazine describing it as 'among the best'. The complete harpsichord works of Rameau (Resonus) received five-star reviews from *BBC Music Magazine*. Steven has recently released Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. He is currently engaged in recording the complete harpsichord works of Johann Ludwig Krebs, Bach's favourite student.

Steven Devine was educated at Chetham's School of Music before reading music at St Peter's College, Oxford. He was Director of Opera Restor'd from 2002-2010 and Kurator and Conductor of the Norwegian Wind Ensemble from 2016-2018.

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