



Ensemble Augelletti

The Morning Star

National Centre for Early Music
Friday 13 December 7.00pm

Ensemble Augelletti

- Sonata a tre 'Pastorale'
from *Duodena Selectarum Sonatarum* 1659
Johann Heinrich Schmelzer
c.1620-1680
- Sonata in D major no. 8
from *Sonata a 1,2,3. per il violin,*
o cornetto, fagotto, chitarone, o simile altro
istromento 1641, Venice
Giovanni Battista Fontana
1589-1630
- Puer nobis nascitur
from *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* 1646
Jacob van Eyck c.1590-1657
- Sonata sopra La Monica à 3, op. 8 no. 45
Biagio Marini 1594-1663
- Sonata no. 9 in F major, Z.810 ('Golden')
Allegro – Largo – Canzona (Allegro) – Grave – Allegro
Henry Purcell 1659-95
- A Flight of Angels in C major, HWV600
George Frideric Handel 1685-1759
- Sonata in F major, op. 5 no. 3
[untitled] – Allegro – Adagio – Allegro
Arcangelo Corelli 1653-1713
- Wie schön leucht uns der Morgenstern, TWV 31:37
Georg Philipp Telemann
1681-1767
- Trio sonata in A minor, TWV 42:a1
Affettuoso – Vivace – Grave – Menuet
- Toccatà Seconda & Canario
from *Libro Quarto d'Intavolatura di Chitarone*
Giovanni Kapsberger c.1580-1651
- Sonata in A major 'La Pastorella', C.106
Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber
1644-1704
- La Scatola degli aghi
from *Sonate, correnti et arie, op.4*
Marco Uccellini c.1603-1680
- Ciaccona, op.12 no. 20
from *Canzoni overo sonate concertate per*
chiesa e camera 1637
Tarquinio Merula 1594/95-1665

On the 23 December 1784 a letter from York-based astronomer Edward Piggot recounted his discovery of variable stars and made York the centre of the astronomical world. Inspired by Piggot, this programme celebrates star-gazers across the centuries – those who are guided during the festive season, and those who made the study of the stars their profession.

We begin our programme with a short 'Pastorale' sonata by **Johann Heinrich Schmelzer**, an Austrian violinist credited with being the first German-speaking composer to publish solo sonatas for the instrument and who dedicated most of his life to music connected to the Christian calendar. He was the exact contemporary of the Austrian Jesuit astronomer Johann Grüber (1623-80) who travelled to China to work in the court of Peking. Ironically, Grüber's most influential publication mapped the lay of the land rather than the stars as he recounted an astounding journey on foot from China to Rome through the Himalayas.

Almost all that is known about **Giovanni Battista Fontana** comes from the preface of his 18 sonatas which were published posthumously, possibly by a friend. They are all exploratory in nature and dip between passages of individual passage work and glorious moments of tutti resonance. Another Fontana, astronomer Francesco Fontana (c.1585-1656), invented a new telescope that enabled the phases of morning stars Mercury and Venus to be observed, and thanks to his work, parts of both the Moon and Mars bear the name 'Fontana'.

Fontana and fellow Brescian **Biagio Marini** were both working in a time of extraordinary astronomical advances. Marini was probably under the direction of Monteverdi in Venice from 1615, and part of the social circles that included Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) who asked Monteverdi to help him source a violin for his nephew. We preface Marini's sonata here with a beautiful setting of the Christmas tune 'Unto us a son is born' by **Jacob van Eyck**.

From Galileo, we move to the shimmering rays of the sun with the 'Golden' sonata by **Henry Purcell** published in 1697. At that moment, the Greenwich Observatory had recently been built, and Margaret (1670-1730) and John (1646-1719) Flamsteed were beginning their work there. Husband and wife worked together on observations and calculations at the observatory and their notebooks record data in two sets of writing as they worked overnight 'alone with my spouse'. John Flamsteed is the first astronomer to have recorded a sighting of Uranus.

A 'Flight of Angels' in arrangement for a mechanical clock by **George Frideric Handel** takes us to Rome where Handel met **Arcangelo Corelli** as the latter was in the patronage of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni. Corelli performed regularly in the Cardinal's Monday evening concert series and benefited from his extensive music library, presided over by librarian and astronomer Francesco Bianchini (1662-1729). Both men were members of the literary society Accademia dell'Arcadia and engaged in an exhilarating exchange of artistic and scientific research. Whilst Corelli became famous for his use of a new style of harmony that operates around the tension and release of diatonic dissonance and resolution, Bianchini is remembered for research that includes his study of Venus, the morning star.

In 1719, the Dresden court celebrated the marriage of the Crown Prince Friedrich Augustus with a huge spectacle that centered on musical works created to celebrate the planets. The planets known at the time were connected to days of the week: Luna/Monday, Mars/Tuesday, Mercury/Wednesday, Jupiter/Thursday, Venus/Friday, Saturn/Saturday and Apollo, the Sun, for Sunday. **Georg Philipp Telemann** attended the event and it is around this time that he composed his Trio Sonata in A minor. We combine it here with an arrangement of his own setting of *Wie schön leucht uns der Morgenstern*.

Coming full circle, we turn to a relatively unknown 'Pastorella' sonata by **Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber**, a virtuosic echo perhaps of his teacher's own pastorale sonata which opened our programme. We pair this with two movements by German lutenist **Giovanni Kapsberger** who was a pioneer of playing techniques on the theorbo. He worked in the household of Cardinal Francesco Barberini. Barberini was part of the panel investigating whether Galileo was guilty of heresy due to his research on heliocentrism in 1616 and was one of the three panel members did not declare Galileo to be guilty.

Marco Uccellini and **Tarquinio Merula** complete our programme with lighthearted dances to bring us into the festive season.

Ensemble Augelletti

Olwen Foulkes *recorders*

Ellen Bundy *violin*

Toby Carr *lute*

Benedict Williams *harpsichord, organ*

Founded in 2019, Ensemble Augelletti is the current New Generation Baroque Ensemble in partnership with BBC Radio 3, the National Centre for Early Music and the Royal College of Music. The ensemble is also, from autumn 2024, a City Music Foundation Artist.

Ensemble Augelletti specialises in creating innovative programmes that connect Baroque chamber music to the everyday stories of people living in the eighteenth century. It is known for engaging performances that demonstrate an ‘equal capacity for elegant pathos and rip-roaring technical dexterity’. (The Arts Desk, 2024).

Ensemble Augelletti performs regularly on BBC Radio 3’s In Tune and Early Music shows and in arts festivals across the UK including York, London, Brighton, Beverley early music festivals. The ensemble was a finalist of the 2022 York International Young Artist Competition and released its debut CD recording, *The Library of a Prussian Princess*, on Barn Cottage Records in 2022. A year-long digital project ‘Pick a Card...’ explored historical playing cards from the British Museum’s collection reaching more than 37,000 online viewers and their key stage 1 outreach programme ‘Augelletti’s Aviary’ in collaboration with Voces8 was launched in September 2024.

ensembleaugelletti.com

NEW GENERATION BAROQUE ENSEMBLE



ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC
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