



## **Spiritato**

***Northern Light***

**National Centre for Early Music**

**Friday 6 December 6.30pm**

## **Spiritato**

**Kinga Ujszászi** *director, violin*  
**Magda Loth-Hill** *violin*  
**Joanne Miller, George Clifford** *violins*  
**Jacob Garside** *viola da gamba*  
**Sergio Bucheli** *theorbo*  
**Catriona McDermid** *bassoon*  
**Nicolás Mendoza** *harpsichord, organ*

## **Northern Light**

Sonata á 5 in D minor, 58:9a      **Johann Heinrich Schmelzer** c.1620-1680  
Ciaccona      **Johann Pachelbel** 1653-1706  
Sonata á 3      **Johann Kaspar Kerll** 1627-93  
Sonata á 5      **Clemens Thieme** 1631-68  
Sonata á 4      **Johann Philipp Krieger** 1649-1725

## **Interval**

Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein,  
BWV641      **Johann Sebastian Bach** 1685-1750  
Musicalische Ergötzung, Suite no. 5 in C      **Johann Pachelbel**  
Sonata á 4      **Andreas Kirchhoff** d.1691  
Sonata á 5      **Johann Wilhelm Furchheim** c.1635-1682  
Sonata á 5, op.1 no. 3      **Romanus Weichlein** 1652-1706

The music in tonight's concert is mostly preserved in the Düben Collection at Uppsala University Library, named for the Düben family who served as kapellmeisters at the Swedish Royal Court from 1640 to 1720. The collection contains around 35,000 manuscripts and a substantial amount of printed music, assembled chiefly during Gustav Düben's tenure (1663-90), and features a rich

diversity of Italian, German, and French compositions, mostly sacred, as well as numerous instrumental works. It includes uniquely preserved church cantatas by Dietrich Buxtehude, a friend of Gustav Düben, as well as compositions by little-known or anonymous composers. Bequeathed to Uppsala University in 1732 by Anders von Düben, Gustav's son, the collection is a significant historical repository.

**Johann Heinrich Schmelzer** was an Austrian composer and one of the leading violinists of the German-speaking lands of his time, influencing the next generation including H.I.F. Biber, likely his student. Little is known of Schmelzer's early life, but he arrived in Vienna in the 1630s and became the organist of St Stephen's Cathedral, working alongside renowned composers like Froberger, Valentini and Bertali. Schmelzer served at the Habsburg court throughout his life, rising to Kapellmeister in 1679, with close ties to Emperor Leopold I. He died during a plague outbreak in 1680. His *Sonata á 5* showcases his imaginative style, marked by a striking opening with unconventional phrase lengths – some seven, eight, or only five bars.

**Johann Pachelbel**, a member of a notable musical family, was born and died in Nuremberg but spent his career across many German-speaking regions, earning widespread renown. Though Lutheran, he served as organist of Vienna's St Stephen's Cathedral before being appointed court organist for Prince Johann Georg of Saxe-Eisenach. It was during his time in Eisenach, that Pachelbel would have become familiar with the Bach family, as Johann Ambrosius Bach, father of Johann Sebastian, was a court trumpeter as well as director of the town musicians. Pachelbel later moved to Erfurt as organist at the Predigerkirche, a position demanding both compositional skill and technical excellence. By 1695, his reputation had grown so significantly that Nuremberg authorities invited him to serve at St Sebaldus, where he remained until his death. His gracious *Ciaccona*, originally for organ, exemplifies his stylistic blend of German emotional depth, French elegance, and Italian dramatic contrast – qualities that showcase his mastery and versatility. The other piece by Pachelbel, later in this programme, is a stylistically very different trio sonata, composed as part of six suites, titled *Musical Delights*.

An influential figure, **Johann Kaspar Kerll** was active in many areas of the German-speaking lands in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Kerll developed a longstanding link with the Wittelsbach Electors of Bavaria and the Habsburgs: he spent time as organist to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria. The Archduke enabled Kerll to travel to Rome where he encountered Carissimi and other composers of the Roman school. Kerll was tasked with composing the Mass for the coronation of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, later becoming his organist in Vienna. Kerll composed across a wide range of genres, writing at least eleven

operas, many Mass settings, and a quantity of keyboard and other instrumental music. His chamber pieces, such as the *Sonata á 3*, are characteristic of the blended style that prevailed in the German-speaking lands, at once elaborate, richly textured and austere.

**Clemens Thieme** received his early training in Dresden and sang as a boy treble at the Danish court chapel in Copenhagen. Although little is known of his short life, Thieme composed prolifically, creating chamber music and religious works, though none were published, leaving us only manuscript sources. His *Sonata á 5* reflects his instrumental style, shaped by his mentor Heinrich Schütz and a blend of North German and Italian influences. Structured as a *sonata a camera* (chamber sonata), it opens with a prelude followed by four stylised dance movements. These dances showcase Thieme's inventive and rich composition, preserving formal dance structures while exploring expressive possibilities.

**Johann Philipp Krieger** came from a musical family in Nuremberg and showed remarkable musical talent early in life, quickly gaining a reputation for his keyboard skills, improvisational abilities and expressive compositions. After advanced studies in Copenhagen, he returned to Nuremberg, then served briefly as organist at the Court of Margrave Christian Ernst in Bayreuth who later funded Krieger's travel to Italy. Immersed in Rome and Venice's musical innovations, he returned to Germany and accepted a position in Halle, dedicating his life to the Saxe-Weissenfels court. Krieger's *Sonata á 4* demonstrates his skillful blending of German and Italian styles, emphasising equality among the four parts. The piece opens with a fugue-like section, followed by extensive *stylus phantasticus* solos for each instrument, ending with a distinctive ostinato section that builds on a five-bar bass line, showcasing Krieger's inventiveness and command of form.

**Johann Sebastian Bach's** chorale prelude on *Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein* ('When we are in greatest need') is part of his *Orgelbüchlein*, a collection of 46 chorale preludes. As in a typical chorale prelude, Bach elaborates on the hymn tune with expressive ornamentation, played on one or two manuals and pedals, enhancing both the melody's beauty and the listener's devotion. This particular melody originated as a French tune by Louis Bourgeois, later paired in 1588 with a penitential text by Lutheran theologian Paul Eber. Eber's text portrays a soul in deep need, seeking solace and finding comfort in the hope of redemption and reunion before God's throne.

Most probably a Danish town musician, **Andreas Kirchhoff** remains a largely obscure figure with little known about his life. His *Sonata á 4*, preserved in the

Düben Collection, is remarkable for its contrast between a virtuosic, demanding violin part and calm, contemplative, almost elegiac passages. This unique blend of intensity and reflection gives the piece a distinctive character.

**Johann Wilhelm Furchheim** was a Dresden town musician like his colleague Thieme and a student of Heinrich Schütz. His *Sonata á 5*, one of six works in the Düben Collection, is a particularly attractive piece. Although labeled a Sonata, it is structured more like a suite for strings, with alternating fast and slow movements and featuring some lovely passages for the bassoon.

**Romanus Weichlein** was an Austrian composer from Linz who entered the Benedictine order in 1671 and earned doctorates at the University of Salzburg, where he probably met Biber. He published two collections, *Parnassus Ecclesiastico-Musicus* and *Encaenia Musices*. *Sonata III* from the latter features a rich texture, ending with a magnificent Ciaconna. Though lesser-known than his contemporaries Schmelzer, Biber and Muffat, Weichlein's unique style has earned him a lasting place in music history.

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## Spiritato

United by a passion for exploring rare pieces of music and little-known composers, Spiritato is gaining a reputation for excellence with imaginative programming and engaging performances. Producing unique, research-based performance projects, avoiding well-trodden paths wherever possible, Spiritato actively seeks to promote forgotten composers and bring their music to a wider audience.

In recent years the group has produced an exciting range of innovative projects including: *Inspiring Bach* – a pioneering new approach to period performance using real natural trumpets and equal tension strings, which was filmed and toured to five UK festivals in 2021/22; *Sonatas from the Düben Collection* – a recording of rare seventeenth-century works discovered in the Düben Collection library at Uppsala University; *Music to her Majestie* explored Royal odes by Purcell, Handel and Eccles in collaboration with lutenist Elizabeth Kenny and soloists including Nicholas Mulroy, Charles Daniels and Nardus Williams (2023).

Individual members of the group are active with period-instrument ensembles throughout the UK and Europe, including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Academy of Ancient Music, Les Talens Lyriques and the Orchestra Révolutionnaire et Romantique.

In January 2025 the group will record its first double-disc album, featuring the complete Concerti Grossi of Handel's virtuoso first violin, Pietro Castrucci. With 3235 bars of music to record, the group is now inviting supporters to 'sponsor a bar' (or perhaps a few)...! To find out more and bring this incredible music to life, please speak to a member of the group, email or visit [www.spiritato.co.uk](http://www.spiritato.co.uk)

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**YORK EARLY MUSIC CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL** is directed by Delma Tomlin MBE and administered by the National Centre for Early Music through the York Early Music Foundation (registered charity number 1068331)

National Centre for Early Music  
St Margaret's Church  
Walmgate  
York YO1 9TL  
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