Wednesday 11 February 2026 | 7.30pm
West Road Concert Hall
Cambridge

Thursday 12 February 2026 | 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall
London

Songs of Love & War

2025-26

ACADEMY *of* ANCIENT MUSIC

Haydn in Paris

Paris in 1780s: the musical playground of Europe

Wednesday 12 November 2025 | West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Friday 14 November 2025 | Milton Court Concert Hall, London

Handel's Messiah

A Christmas tradition we've made our own

Monday 15 December 2025 | Barbican Hall, London

Songs of Love and War

Monteverdi's genre-defying Madrigals

Wednesday 11 February 2026 | West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Thursday 12 February 2026 | Milton Court Concert Hall, London

Gambarini: English Impresaria

Elegance, exuberance and one remarkable woman

Wednesday 11 March 2026 | West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Thursday 12 March 2026 | Milton Court Concert Hall, London

The Chosen One

Leipzig's got talent: JS Bach and his competitors

Tuesday 14 April 2026 | West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Thursday 16 April 2026 | Milton Court Concert Hall, London

Rhythm Across Time

An ingenious musical voyage across five centuries

Wednesday 13 May 2026 | West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Thursday 14 May 2026 | Milton Court Concert Hall, London

Handel's Serse

Handel's sensational opera of love and power

Friday 19 June 2026 | Barbican Hall, London

2025-26

ACADEMY *of* ANCIENT MUSIC

ACADEMY *of* ANCIENT MUSIC

Academy of Ancient Music
Laurence Cummings director & harpsichord

Anna Dennis soprano
Ed Lyon tenor

Danni O'Neill soprano
Ciara Hendrick alto
Rory Carver tenor
Rob Macdonald bass

MONTEVERDI *from* Madrigals, Book Eight

Altri canti d'Amor

Hor che'l ciel e la terra

Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda

Ballo: Movete al mio bel suon la piante snelle

INTERVAL

Altri canti di Marte, e di sua schiera

Vago augelletto che cantando vai

Ninfa che, scalza il piede

Dolcissimo uscignolo

Lamento della Ninfa

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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
ORCHESTRA-IN-RESIDENCE

barbican
Associate Ensemble

Academy of Ancient Music was founded in 1973, with a mission that seemed revolutionary at the time. It began with a simple, radical question: what could historical research tell us about the way the composers of the 17th and 18th centuries approached their music? Our founder, the harpsichordist Christopher Hogwood, hoped that 'by studying their manuscripts and instruments, by returning to the colours, the style and clarity of their individual periods, we can rediscover their works.'

It was a bold ambition. AAM was not alone in its field, but it was in the vanguard, making recordings of Handel, Purcell, Mozart and many more that have helped to define the way we play – and listen – today. We're proud of our recordings (more than 300), and of our partnerships with some of the most inspirational and inquisitive artists in the field, such as Richard Egarr and Robert Levin – with whom, in 2024, we completed the first ever recorded cycle of Mozart's works for keyboard and orchestra.

Today, under the direction of Laurence Cummings, AAM is reaffirming its founding values. We manage our own record label, and through our education programme AAMplify we're sharing our expertise with emerging performers and listeners. Above all, we give live performances that put our principles and our scholarship into living, inspirational practice.

For our audiences, the results can be transformative; refreshing, in fact, in all sorts of surprising ways. 'The music doesn't just wash over you' is one reaction that we've heard: 'You're pulled into each part … rawer and more elemental, and yet softer, organic.' That's the aim, of course. Great art should be startling, vital, moving – but never routine. In its sixth decade AAM continues to explore: uncovering forgotten repertoire, and charging even familiar classics with an emotional conviction that sweeps away barriers and unites performer and listener alike. You might even call it transcendent. To discover the world anew is one of life's most fulfilling experiences – one that AAM aims to share every time it plays.

Welcome

from John McMunn, Chief Executive

When planning a season, it isn't unusual for us to consider programme ideas for months or even years before scheduling performances. But this evening's concert stretches this process to the extreme!

The seeds for *Songs of Love & War* were planted at the Royal Academy of Music in the early 2000s, when our featured soloists Anna Dennis and Ed Lyon were still students and AAM's Music Director Laurence Cummings was Head of Historical Performance. Remarkably, despite speaking at length about a programme of music from Monteverdi's *Madrigals, Book Eight* at that time – and all three subsequently going on to make important international careers, often working together in different combinations – the idea remained unrealised until now.

This long gestation pleasingly mirrors Monteverdi's own. *Madrigals, Book Eight* was published in 1638, nearly 20 years after his previous collection of secular music. The intervening years saw the composer issuing mainly sacred music for use in the liturgy at St Mark's in Venice. But he continued to find further creative outlet in the form of the madrigal, which he reshaped and expanded in scope to serve his ever-developing dramatic and poetic purposes.

Despite being written 400 years ago, the results remain startlingly and strikingly fresh, especially in the hands of our acclaimed instrumentalists. It is a privilege to share this music with them – and with you, dear reader – tonight. Welcome, and enjoy the show!

The Italian Job – Becoming Baroque

Graham Coatman tracks the evolution of Monteverdi's Madrigals to their revolutionary peak in Book Eight.

'Monteverdi's eighth and last book of madrigals, published in Venice in 1638, differed significantly in scale and scope from all its predecessors. The pieces contained in it went far beyond the conventional idea of what a madrigal was or could be and brought together pieces composed over the previous two decades. [It] was intended as a statement of artistic principles and compositional authority as much as a homogeneous collection.'

So wrote Andrew Clements in *The Guardian* in 2005. But how did Monteverdi reach this pinnacle of achievement? The significance of the publication of *Le Nuove Musiche* in 1602 may be lost in history, but Giulio Caccini, leading light of the Florentine Camerata and composer of this collection of monodic solos and songs with bass accompaniment, set out the ethos of the Renaissance: away with the old counterpoint of the Polyphonic school (supremely portrayed in the music of Palestrina), with everything measured and steady, all voices equal. The new way looks towards the Baroque, full of contrasts, fast/slow, loud/soft, solo/tutti, calm/dramatic. Above all, the poetry shapes the music – its inflections, emotions, articulations, and imagery. As Rinaldo Alessandrini in his article accompanying his epic project recording all Monteverdi's madrigals over 20 years states, 'Examination of how Monteverdi (but not him alone) kept up with the shifting sands of poetry during his career as a composer requires us to focus on the function of poetry in 16th- and 17th-century culture.' The choices that Monteverdi made reflect not just fashions but a sense of, and pleasure in, daily contact with poetry and its effect on the reader's imagination. To overlook, neglect or subordinate the poetic text to the music in the way we listen to his music, which may be distant from the habits of our day, risks a betrayal of Monteverdi's objectives, misrepresenting the general cultural context in which he was working. Monteverdi's eight books of madrigals span the whole of his working life, and offer a barometer showing how his personal and professional ups and downs are reflected in his music.

There is almost no record of Monteverdi's early training. We first hear of him at his baptism, named Claudio Giovanni Antonio Monteverdi on 15 May, 1567 in Cremona, a town known for its violin-making heritage, son of Baldassare Monteverdi, an apothecary, and his wife Maddalena. A younger brother, Giulio Cesare, was born in 1573, who also became a musician. At age 15, full of confidence and prodigious promise, Claudio's *Sacrae cantiunculae* (*Sacred Little Songs*) for three voices, was published (Venice, 1582). In this he describes himself as a pupil of Marc'Antonio Ingegneri, *maestro di cappella* at Cremona Cathedral. Clearly, Ingegneri had given the young Monteverdi a good grounding in counterpoint and composition. Yet there is no trace of Monteverdi being a chorister or involved in the cathedral's music.

Ingegneri is considered by the text books as rather dull, conservative, yet his book of madrigals looks to the adventurous Ferrara models (with composers such as Striggio (he of 'the other' 40 part motet!) and Luzzaschi as leading lights.) So from the first book of Madrigals Monteverdi was, through Ingegneri, acquainted with the new style alternating contrapuntal tension and homophony. At the time the calling card of any musician, especially one wishing to be recognised as a composer, was a book of madrigals. The first three books were in turn dedicated to Count Marco Verità, Cremona (1587), Giacomo Ricardi, President of the Senate and Council of Milan (1590), and Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga of Mantua (1592). It was this last publication that earned him the post at Mantua, initially as a violist, at the rich and powerful court of the Gonzaga family. The choice of texts is important. Of 19 pieces in the first book, eight are anonymous, but the others are all poets born or connected with Ferrara, and significantly include poetry by Giovanni Maria Bonardo, Battista Guarini, and Torquato Tasso, rising stars at the time. There were close political, dynastic and cultural links between the courts of Ferrara and Mantua. Vincenzo Gonzaga was the ruler of the Duchy of Mantua and the Duchy of Montferrat from 1587 to 1612, and with the many dukedoms across Italy, who constantly vied with each other to harness the best talent, newly assuming the head of the Gonzaga dynasty would have seen Monteverdi as a prize possession!

In the second book of Madrigals, in numerical terms, the poetry of Torquato Tasso, the poet of the moment, dominates. Whilst the music shows an increase in expressive counterpoint, guaranteeing 'gravitas', it still aims to please with appealing harmonies. The range goes from unashamed eroticism of *Bevea Fillide*

Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua

mia, to the evocation of nature in *Ecco mormorar l'onde*, which has always been a real crowd pleaser. The third book of Madrigals sees an increase in Monteverdi's interest in the poetry of Guarini. Absent from the poetry chosen for the third book is an element of cheerfulness or lightness in the treatment of the theme of love. Where Tasso favours the epic, psychological approach, contrasting solemn discourse with lighter lyrics for love episodes, Guarini, perhaps best known for his tragi-comedy *Il Pastor fido*, blends the two more subtly. This is mirrored in Monteverdi's music, where previously there was a schematic plan switching from homophonic to contrapuntal styles, now there is a more subtle transition overlapping the two.

Eleven years elapse before we get the fourth book, published 1603. This gap is explained by Duke Vincenzo taking his court on a series of military exploits, firstly to Hungary in 1595, going on to visit Trent, Innsbruck, Linz, Prague and Vienna. Vincenzo joined

Claudio Monteverdi aged 63, by Bernardo Strozzi

the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II's crusade against the Turks, (probably more with a view to his own financial and personal gain rather than soldierly prowess or altruistic intent!). The following years presented Monteverdi with a number of difficulties. He had married the popular court singer Claudia Cattaneo in 1599, and just as he was about to be dragged off to Hungary for a second campaign in 1601, she was expecting their first child. This was excuse enough to stay at home. In 1595 Giaches de Wert, a close colleague and composer Monteverdi admired, had died. He had been *Maestro di Capella* to the Ducal Chapel. Monteverdi had initially been hired as a violist, but he aspired to this post. Even with duties as a composer involved in secular court music he would have been considered less important than the singers. The *Maestro di Capella* would have been a singer, with additional daily duties to provide the chapel music, and as such would have commanded a significantly higher salary. Monteverdi hoped to succeed de Wert in the post, but Benedetto Pallavicino was appointed. Finally, in November 1601, just after Pallavicino died, he wrote to the Duke, 'If I did not hasten to ask personally of Your Highness's good grace … the world having seen me persevere in Your Highness's service, after the death of the famous Signor Striggio, and that of the excellent Signor Giaches, and a third time after that of Franceschino (Rovigo), and lastly this of Messer Pallavicino … I ask beseechingly to be Director of Music both of the chamber and church; which post, if your kindness and grace will so honour me, I shall receive with the humility … when he is encouraged and favoured by a great prince as is Your Highness …' He succeeded this time!

With an improved salary and social standing (he was granted Mantuan citizenship in 1602) things were looking brighter for the Monteverdi family. As mentioned above, manuscripts of works were often in circulation amongst fellow composers, and performing ensembles, ahead of publication – a clear marketing strategy. In 1600 Giovanni Maria Artusi, an aggressive and inflexible defender of traditional rules of music and composition, who was violently opposed to any attempt to go against them published his polemic *L'Artusi, overo Delle imperfettioni della moderna musica* ('Artusi, or On the imperfections of modern music'). Artusi criticises Monteverdi (without naming him), condemning procedures that do not correspond to the customary rules of composition he deems indisputable. He concentrates his censure on use of dissonance he considers irregular and irrational, which Monteverdi on the other hand uses to heighten the emotional content of the text in order to extract the maximum effect, and some melodic procedures which, from his point of view, are theoretically inadmissible.

The publication of the Fourth and Fifth books in 1605 reignited this public discourse. Monteverdi had previously

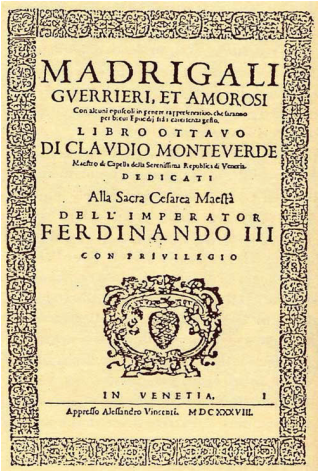
refused to be drawn into discussion, but in the preface to the fifth book of Madrigals, responding to Artusi's sequel published in 1603, he set out the principles of his *Seconda Pratica*. In Claudio's defence his younger brother also wrote in 1607 that the 'Second Practice' was not a new invention, but had been used in compositions by Cipriano de Rore some 50 years earlier.

Events moved on. The importance of Guarini for poetry in music cannot be overstated. Monteverdi, partly inspired by Guarini's success at the court of Ferrara, and being involved in the production of his tragi-comedy *Il Pastor Fido*, saw in his poetry the ideal vehicle for his own personal revolution. In fact the Fifth Book is entirely devoted to Guarini, and the theme is of unrequited love. The major step forward is the *madrigale concertato*, in which instrumental writing forms an important and innovative part of the structure. Also, at the centre is the sequence of five madrigals in an extended and highly dramatic scene surrounding the unhappy couple, Dorinda and Silvio. It was Vincenzo's heir, Francesco, who commissioned Monteverdi in 1606 to write the opera *L'Orfeo*, to a libretto by Alessandro Striggio, for the Carnival season of 1607. This was followed in 1608 by the opera *L'Arianna* (libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini), intended for the celebration of the marriage of Francesco to Margherita of Savoy. All the music for this opera is lost except *Ariadne's Lament*. However, there were tragedies along the way. Monteverdi's wife died in September 1607 and the young singer Caterina Martinelli, who lived in his house, intended for the title role of Arianna, died of smallpox in March 1608. Monteverdi also resented his increasingly poor financial treatment by the Gonzagas. The extravagant Vincenzo, whose campaigns had fared badly, often away, regularly forgot to pay salaries. There are many letters from Monteverdi asking for back payment of several months salary at a time. In early 1612 Vincenzo died. Francesco succeeded him, and court intrigues and cost-cutting led to the dismissal of Monteverdi and his brother Giulio Cesare. Despite Francesco's own death from smallpox in December 1612, Monteverdi was unable to gain favour with his successor, his brother Cardinal Ferdinando Gonzaga. However, in 1613, following the death of Giulio Cesare Martinengo, Monteverdi gained the post as maestro at the Basilica of San Marco in Venice. Recall that all the little dukedoms over Italy ran as small independent states: so, the salary of 400 ducats from Venice was worth rather more than the 450 ducats Monteverdi had received at Mantua!

The absence of a dedicatee, an invariable practice of the time, for the publication of the sixth book of Madrigals (1614) says much about the private character and dimension of this collection. It brings together madrigals that had already appeared, from 1609 onwards, in particular, the two laments: that of *Arianna* in a five-part version, and the *Sestina*, with text written by Scipione Agnelli in memory of the singer Caterina Martinelli. Themes of separation dominate the dramaturgy of the Sixth Book: Ariadne from Theseus, Corinna from Glauco (in the *Sestina*), Petrarch and Laura in *Zefiro torna*, and *Ohimè il bel viso*, Florida and Floro, and that of Alceo and Lidia in *Misero Alceo*. The appearance of *Arianna's Lament* in its five-part form precedes the publication of its original operatic version for solo voice, which did not appear until 1623. Extensive use of *basso continuo* allows Monteverdi to continue exploring the potential of the 'mixed' madrigal style, with solo passages, often named characters, alternating with polyphony. The sixth book is the last in which Monteverdi uses polyphony based on five voices.

So the seventh book, entitled *Concerto. Settimo Libro di Madrigali a 1.2.3.4 & Sei Voci, Con altri generi de Canti*, published in Venice in 1619, celebrates a new musical concept. The customary polyphonic organisation disappears, and through the consistent use of *basso continuo* the forces are reduced to one or a few voices. Even if these madrigals are not intended for the stage, the musical content invites the listener to find a new way of listening, asking them to imagine every piece ideally staged. A departure from the classic form of the madrigal was by no means new (find the work of Giulio Caccini and Sigismondo d'India). Monteverdi had found a new facility for story-telling even when just two or three voices were in play.

Madrigali Guerrieri et Amorosi was the title Monteverdi gave to the 22 compositions collected in the eighth book (1638). Two adjectives to describe two distinct parts of the collection. In Monteverdi's thinking, war and love exemplify two opposing concepts, yet there is symmetry in the two halves. They open with a grand setting of a sonnet, with six voices and instruments. Then a series of solos, duets or trios. Each half ends with a theatrical set piece. There is a lengthy preface, with a scholarly tone and frequent quotations from old sources attempting to provide a context for both his stylistic awareness and knowledge of having produced a ground-breaking collection. In fact, Monteverdi is quite concerned to demonstrate theoretical and philosophical reasons for the creation of what he would call *stile concitato*, an agitated musical style that suited translating war-like texts into music. In fact this had featured in *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, composed in 1624. The two *Balli*, *Movete al mio bel suon* and *Il ballo delle ingrate*) closing the two parts are prefaced by fascinating texts on their staging and guidelines for

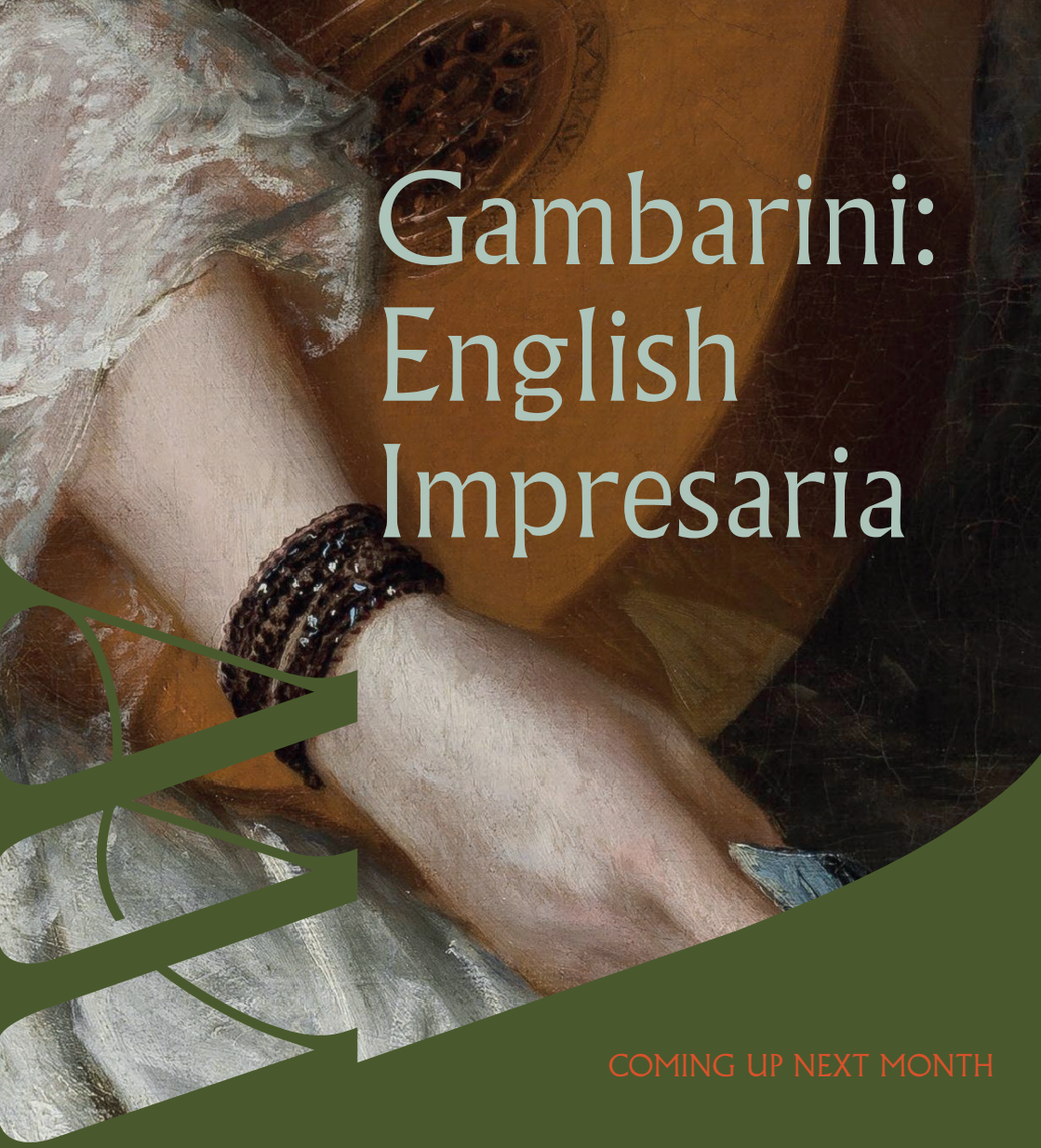

MADRIGALI
GVERRIERI, ET AMOROSI
Con alcuni episodi in genere rappresentativo, che saranno per breue spatio, dalli concertanti gesti.
LIBRO OTTAVO
DI CLAVDIO MONTEVERDE
Maestro di Capella della Serenissima Republica di Venetia.
DEDICATI
Alla Sacra Cesarea Maestà
DELL' IMPERATOR
FERDINANDO III
CON PRIVILEGIO
IN VENETIA, I
Appresso Alessandro Vincenti. M DC XXXVIII.

performance. Be mindful there are three different genres, *Guerriero*, *Amoroso* and *Rappresentativo*, at work in this culmination of Monteverdi's dazzling composition. Giovan Battista Doni, Florentine music theorist, cautions '*stile recitativo*, *rappresentativo* and *espressivo* are not entirely the same: By *stile recitativo* we understand that melody that can be graciously and elegantly recited [...] so that it will be close to normal speech, but affecting, [...] But by *rappresentativo* we should mean that kind of melody which is truly suited to the stage, that is, to any kind of dramatic action that one may wish to represent in song.'

One final note: Monteverdi's singers always complained at the demands he made on them. They had to be *virtuosi*. Now sit back and enjoy this stunning display of timeless music – for its sonority, variety, colour, emotion and drama.

Programme note © Graham Coatman

Texts and translations start on page 12



Gambarini: English Impresaria

COMING UP NEXT MONTH

Wednesday 11 March | 7.30pm
West Road Concert Hall
Cambridge

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Milton Court Concert Hall
London

Programme includes
Gambarini Orchestrated music from Op. 1
Handel Judas Maccabaeus (excerpts)
Geminiani Concerto Grosso No. 6
Tessarini Violin Concerto No. 7

Mhairi Lawson soprano
Bojan Čičić director & violin

Monteverdi Madrigals, Book Eight
texts & translations

Altri canti d'Amor

Sinfonia

Altri canti d'Amor, tenero arciero,
i dolci vezzi e i sospirati baci,
narri gli sdegni e le bramate paci,

quand'unisce due alme un sol pensiero.

Let others sing of Cupid, the gentle archer,
of his sweet charms and sighing kisses,
let them tell of quarrels and of the longed-for truces
when two souls are united by a single thought.

Di Marte io canto furibundo e fiero,
i duri incontri e le battaglie audaci.
Fo nel mio canto bellicoso e fiero
strider le spade e bombeggiar le faci.

I sing of a proud and raging Mars,
of his bitter conflicts and valiant battles.
With my fierce and warlike song I make
swords clash and torches blaze.

Tu, cui tessuta han di Cesare alloro la
corona immortal mentre Bellona,
gradite il verde ancor novo lavoro.

You for whom an immortal crown of
imperial laurel has been woven,
accept Bellona's wreath, still green and fresh.

Che mentre guerre canta e guerre sona, o gran Fernando,
l'orgoglioso coro del tuo sommo valor canta e ragiona.
Sonnet anon.

For in our songs and music of war, o mighty Ferdinand,
our proud choir celebrates your matchless valour.

Hor che'l ciel e la terra (part one)

Hor che'l ciel e la terra e 'l vento tace

e le fere e gl'augelli il sonno affrena,

Notte il carro stellato in giro mena
e nel suo letto il mar senz'onda giace.
Veglio, penso, ardo, piango;
e chi mi sface sempre m'è innanzi per mia dolce pena:

Now that the sky and the earth and the wind are silent
and the wild creatures and the birds are reined in sleep,
Night leads its starry chariot in its round,
and the sea without a wave lies in its bed.
I look, think, burn, weep;
and she who destroys me is always before my eyes to my sweet distress:

guerr'è 'l mio stato, d'ira e di duol piena,
e sol di lei pensando ho qualche pace.
Sonnet Francesco Petrarca (1304-74), Canzoniere, CLXIV

war is my state, filled with grief and anger,
and only in thinking of her do I find peace.

Così suol d'una chiara fonte viva (part two)

Così suol d'una chiara fonte viva
move 'l dolce e l'amaro ond'io mi pasco;
una man sola mi risana e punge;
e perché 'l mio martir non giung'a riva,
mille volte il dì moro e mille nasco,
tanto da la salute mia son lunge.

So from one pure living fountain
flow the sweet and bitter which I drink:
one hand alone heals me and pierces me:
and so that my ordeal may not reach haven,
I am born and die a thousand times a day,
I am so far from my salvation.

Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda

Battle of Tancredi and Clorinda

Narrator, Clorinda and Tancredi

Tancredi, che Clorinda un uomo stima,
vuol ne l'armi provarla al paragone.
Va girando colei l'alpestre cima

verso altra porta, ove d'entrar dispone.

Segue egli impetuoso, onde assai prima

che giunga, in guisa avien che d'armi suone,

ch'ella si volge e grida: 'O tu, che porte,

che corri sì?' Rispose: 'E guerra e morte.'

'Guerra e mort'havrai' disse, 'io non rifiuto

darlati, se la cerchi, e ferma attende.'

Non vuol Tancredi, ch'ebbe a piè veduto
il suo nemico, usar cavallo, e scende

e impugna l'un l'altro il ferro acuto,
e aguzza l'orgoglio e l'ira accende;

Tancredi, believing Clorinda to be a man,
wishes to challenge her to a duel.
She meanwhile strides around the rocky peak

towards a gate, through which she wishes to pass.

He rushes after her, and well before he reaches

her the clattering of his armour can be heard,

so that she turns and cries out, 'O you who run after me,

what do you bring?' He replied, 'Warfare and death.'

'Warfare and death you will have,' she said. 'I shall not

deny you, if that is what you seek, and will not be moved.'

Having seen his enemy on foot, Tancredi
wants to fight on equal terms, and dismounts.

Both take hold of their keen-edged swords
their pride goaded, their anger sparked;

Please turn the page quietly

e vansi incontro a passi tardi e lenti

Quai duo tori e d'ira ardenti.

with slow, measured steps they approach one another
like two jealous bulls inflamed with fury.

Sinfonia

Notte, che nel profondo oscuro seno
chiudesti e ne l'oblio fatto sì grande,

degno d'un chiaro sol, degne d'un pieno

teatro opre sarian sì memorande.

Piaciati ch'indi il tragga e'n bel sereno
alle future età lo spieghi e mande.

Viva la fama lor; e tra lor gloria splenda

del fosco tuo l'alta memoria.

Night, you who have allowed so great a feat
to fade into obscurity in the depths of your dark breast,
such memorable deeds deserve to have bright sunlight
shone upon them, and to be retold in crowded theatres.
Allow me therefore to illumine them,
and to pass this tale on to future generations.
May their renown live long; and may the noble memory
of their glory shine forth from your darkness.

Non schivar, non parar, non pur ritrarsi
voglion costor, né qui destrezz'ha parte.

Non danno i colpi or finti or pieni or tardi:
toglie l'ombra e'l furor l'uso de l'arte.
Odi le spade orribilmente urtarsi
a mezzo il ferro, el piè d'orma non parte;
sempre il piè fermo e la man sempre in moto,
né scende taglio in van né ponta a voto.

Dodging or parrying blows, or retreating –
such moves are not for them, nor has finesse any part to play here.
They do not feint or deceive or delay,
darkness and rage deter the use of skill.
Hear the terrifying clash of sword
against sword, as they stand their ground;
their feet are like stone, but their hands are never still,
no thrust of the blade is in vain, every blow hits its mark.

L'onta irrita lo sdegno alla vendetta,
e la vendetta poi l'onta rinova;

onde sempre al ferir, sempre alla fretta
stimol novo s'aggiunge e piaga nova.

D'hor in hor più si mesce e più ristretta

Each insult spurs on their vengeful anger,
and desire for vengeance in turn renews the insult;
thus continual new urges and new wounds
spur them on to keep up their frenzied fighting.
Now and then they move in close and the battle

si fa la pugna, e spada oprar non giova:

dansi co' pomi, infelloniti e crudi,

cozzan con gli elmi insiem e con gli scudi.

Tre volte il cavalier la donna stringe
con le robuste braccia, ed altre tante
poi da quei nodi tenaci ella si scinge,
nodi di fier nemico e non d'amante.
Tornano al ferro, e l'un e l'altro il tinge
con molto sangue; e stanco ed anelante

e questi e quelli al fin pur si ritira,
e dopo lungo faticar respira.

L'un l'altro guarda, e del suo corpo esangue

su 'l pomo de la spada appoggia il peso.
Già de l'ultima stella il raggio langue
su'l primo albor ch'è in oriente acceso.

Vede Tancredi in maggior copia il sangue
del suo nemico, e in sé non tanto offeso.

Ne gode e insuperbisce. Oh nostra folle
mente ch'ogn'aura di fortuna estolle!

Misero, di che godi? oh quanto mesti
fiano i trionfi ed infelice il vanto!
Gli occhi tuoi pagheran, s'in vita resti,
di quel sangue ogni stilla un mar di pianto.
Così tacendo e rimirando, questi
sanguinosi guerrier cessaro alquanto.

Ruppe il silenzio alfin Tancredi e disse,

perch'il suo nome a l'un l'altro scoprisse:

becomes more intimate, with no room to use swords:
they strike cruel, brutal blows with the pommels instead,
and their helmets and shields clash together.

Three times the knight traps the lady
within his strong arms, and as many times
she breaks free from his powerful embrace,
that of an enemy, not a lover.
They return to swordplay, and both spill
an abundance of blood; then, weary and gasping for breath,
the two combatants eventually stand back
and pause for a moment after their long ordeal.

Watching each other, they lean in exhaustion
on the pommels of their swords.
The light of the last star is now fading
into the first fires of sunrise in the eastern sky.
Tancredi sees more blood has been shed
by his enemy, that his own wounds are less serious.
This fills him with joy and pride.
Oh, our foolish minds that extol every breath of fortune!

Wretch, why such joy? oh, how melancholy
are your triumphs, how unhappy your pride!
Your eyes, if your life is spared, will weep
a sea of tears for every drop of that blood.
Thus gazing at each other in silence,
these bloodsoaked warriors paused for a while.
Finally, Tancredi broke the silence and spoke,
wishing each to know the other's name:

‘Nostra sventura è ben che qui s’impieghi
tanto valor, dove silenzio il copra.

Ma poi che sorte rea vien che ci nieghi
e lode e testimon degni de l’opra,

pregoti, se fra l’armi han loco i prieghi,
che ’l tuo nome e’l tuo stato a me tu scopra,
acciò ch’io sappia, o vinto o vincitore,
chi la mia morte o la mia vita honore.’

Rispose la feroce: ‘Indarno chiedi

quel ch’ho per uso di non far palese.

Ma chiunque io mi sia, tu innanzi vedi
un di quei duo che la gran torre accese.’

Arse di sdegno a quel parlar Tancredi:
‘E in mal punto il dicesti; [indi riprese]
e’l tuo dir e’l tacer di par m’alletta,
barbaro discortese alla vendetta.’

Torna l’ira nei cori e li trasporta,

benché deboli in guerra, O fiera pugna,

u’è l’arte in bando, u’è già la forza è morta,
ove invece, d’entrambi il furor pugna!
O che sanguigna e spaziosa porta
fa l’una e l’altra spada ovunque giugna,
ne l’armi e nelle carni! e se la vita

non esce, sdegno tienla al petto unita.

Ma ecco omai l’ora fatal è giunta
che ’l viver di Clorinda al suo fin deve.
Spinge egli ferro nel bel sen di punta
che vi s’immerge e’l sangue avido beve;

‘Truly our misfortune is that we are proving
our valour here, where it will be concealed in silence.
But since unkind destiny must deny us
both the praise and the renown our deeds deserve,
I pray, if prayers have any place in battle,
that you reveal your name and rank to me,
that I may know, whether I am conquered
or conqueror, to whom I owe my death or my life.’

His brave opponent replied, ‘In vain do you ask
me to reveal that which I am accustomed to concealing.
But whoever I may be, you see before you
one of the two who set the great tower on fire.’
At this, Tancredi blazed with anger:
‘Your admission is inopportune;
both your words and your silence,
vile barbarian, incite me to vengeance.’

Anger fills their hearts again, transporting them,
despite their exhaustion, to war, to that fierce struggle
in which skill is banished, strength is dead,
and in their place fury alone fights on!
Oh, what gaping, bloody wounds are made
by their swords as they strike one another’s
armour and flesh! And if each clings on to life,
it is only anger that keeps it beating within their breast.

And yet behold, the fatal hour has come
at which Clorinda’s life is doomed to end.
Tancredi plunges the point of his sword
into her fair chest, where it greedily drinks her blood;

e la veste, che d'or vago trapunta
le mammelle stringea tenera e lieve,
l'empie d'un caldo fiume. Ella già sente
morirsi, e'l piè le manca egro e languente.

Segue egli la vittoria, e la trafitta
vergine minacciando incalza e preme.
Ella, mentre cadea, la voce afflitta
movendo, disse le parole estreme;
parole ch'a lei novo spirto ditta,
spirto di fé, di carità, di speme:
virtù ch'or Dio l'infonde, e se rubella
in vita fu, la volse in morte ancella.

'Amico, hai vinto: io ti perdon, perdona
tu ancora, al corpo no, che nulla pave,
all'alma sì; deh! per lei prega, e dona
battesmo a me ch'ogni mia colpa lave.'

In queste voci languide risuona
un non so che di flebile e soave
ch'al cor gli scende ed ogni sdegno ammorza,
e gl'occhi a lagrimar gli invoglia e sforza.

Poco quindi lontan nel sen del monte
scaturia mormorando un picciol rio.
Egli v'accorse e l'elmo empié nel fonte,
e tornò mesto al grande uffizio e pio.

Tremar sentì la man, mentre la fronte
non conosciuta ancor sciolse e scoprio.

and the tunic, embroidered with exquisite gold,
which lightly and tenderly encloses her breasts,
now fills with a warm river. She can feel herself dying,
and staggers on her weary feet.

He pursues his victory, and leaps upon
the wounded maiden while uttering threats.
As she fell, she opened her suffering lips
and spoke her final words;
words that came from a new spirit in her,
a spirit of faith, charity and hope:
virtues now instilled in her by God, for though in life
she rejected Him, in death she became his handmaid.

'My friend, you have won: I forgive you, I beg
your forgiveness too, not for my body, which
fears nothing, but for my soul; ah! pray for it,
and give me the baptism that will wash away all my sins.'
In these softly spoken words
is a sound so sorrowful and gentle
that it enters his heart and banishes any anger,
and fills his eyes with unstoppable tears.

Close by there welled a little murmuring stream
from the depths of the mountain.
He ran to it and filled his helmet from the spring,
and sadly returned to perform that great and sacred rite.
He felt his hand tremble as he removed her helm
to reveal that still unknown brow.

Please turn the page quietly

La vide e la conobbe, e restò senza
e voce e moto. Ahi vista! ahi conoscenza!

Non morì già, ché sue virtuti accolse
tutte in quel punto e in guardia al cor le mise,
e premendo il suo affanno a dar si volse
vita con l'acqua a chi co 'l ferro uccise.

Mentr'egli il suon de' sacri detti sciolse,
colei di gioia trasmutossi e rise;

e in atto di morir lieta e vivace,
dir parea: 'S'apre il ciel, io vado in pace'.

Torquato Tasso (1544-95): Gerusalemme liberata, XII, 2-8

He saw her face and recognised her, and could neither
speak nor move. Ah, what a sight, what sudden realisation!

He did not die, but gathered his inner forces
and set them to guard his heart,

then stifling his torment he turned his attention
to baptising with the water the one his sword had killed.
While he recited the holy blessing,
she was transformed by joy and laughed aloud;
and as she died, smiling and alert,
she seemed to say: 'Heaven is opening, I go in peace.'

BALLO: MOVETE AL MIO BEL SUON LA PIANTA SNELLE

Introduzione al ballo: Volgendo in ciel per immortal sentiero

Volgendo in ciel per immortal sentiero
le ruote della luce alma e serena,

un secolo di pace il sol rimena
sotto il re novo del Romano Impero.

Su, mi si rechi omai del grand'Ibero

profonda tazza inghirlandata e piena,
che correndomi al cor di vena in vena,

sgombri da l'alma ogni mortal pensiero.

As Apollo drives his chariot of blessed,
peaceful light along its eternal, heavenly course,
he brings with him an era of peace
under the new king of the Roman Empire.

Come, pour me a deep glass of Spanish wine,
full to the brim and wreathed in flowers,
wine that will run through my veins to my heart,
banishing all mortal concerns from my soul.

Venga la nobil cetra.	Bring me my noble lyre.
Il crin di fiori cingemi, o Filli.	Place the flowery crown upon my brow, o Phyllis.
Io ferirò le stelle	My song praising
cantando del mio re gli eccelsi allori.	the lofty virtues of my king will strike the stars.
E voi che per beltà, donne e donzelle,	And you ladies and damsels who walk in beauty
gite superbe d'immortali onori,	and in dignity, to your everlasting honour,
movete al mio bel suon le piante snelle,	let your slender feet dance to my fine music,
sparso di rose il crin leggiadro e biondo,	your fair, golden hair entwined with roses,
e lasciato dell'Istro il ricco fondo,	and let the naiads of the Danube too
vengan l'umide ninfe al ball'anch'elle.	leave its deep waters and join our dance.

Ballo part one: Movete al mio bel suon la piante snelle

Movete al mio bel suon le piante snelle,	Let your slender feet dance to my fine music,
sparse di rose il crin leggiadro e biondo,	your fair, golden hair entwined with roses.
e lasciato dell'Istro il ricco fondo,	And let the naiads of the Danube too
vengan l'umide ninfe al ball'anch'elle.	leave its deep waters and join our dance.
Fuggano in questo dì nembi e procelle	Let clouds and storms flee on this day,
d'aure odorate al mormorar de l'onde,	let the happy murmur of the perfumed breeze
fatt'eco al mio cantar, rimbombi il mondo	echo my song, and let the world resound
l'opre di Ferdinando eccelse e belle.	with the fine and noble feats of Ferdinand.

Ballo part two: Ei l'armi cinse

Ei l'armi cinse e su destrier alato	He took up his weapons and on his winged steed
corse le piagge e su la terra dura	travelled throughout the land, and rested his head
la testa riposò sul braccio armato.	on his mailclad arm upon the hard ground.
Le torri eccelse e le superbe mura	He scattered lofty towers and imposing walls
al vento sparse e fe' vermiglio il prato,	to the winds, and turned the fields red with blood,
lasciand'ogni altra gloria al mondo oscura.	eclipsing all other earthly glories.

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

Altri canti di Marte (part one)

Altri canti di Marte e di sua schiera
gli arditi assalti e l'onorate imprese,
le sanguigne vittorie e le contese,
i trionfi di morte orrida e fera.
Io canto Amor, da questa tua guerriera,
quant'ebbi a sostener mortali offese,
com'un guardo mi vinse, un crin mi prese:
istoria miserabile, ma vera.

Let others sing of Mars and of the daring attacks
and honourable enterprises undertaken by his troops,
of their bloody victories and clashes,
of the triumphs of fierce and cruel death.
I sing, Cupid, of this warrior maid of yours,
of the many mortal insults I have had to endure,
A glance conquered me, a lock of hair took me:
a miserable story, but true.

Due belli occhi fur l'armi (part two)

Due belli occhi fur l'armi, onde trafitta
giacque, e di sangue in vece amaro pianto
sparse lunga stagion l'anima afflitta.
Tu, per lo cui valor la palm'e 'l vanto
ebbe di me la mia nemica invitta,
se desti morte al cor, dà vita al canto.

Two beautiful eyes were the weapons whose blows
have wounded and felled me, and my stricken heart
has long shed bitter tears in place of blood.
You, for whose valour the palm and praise
were won by my undefeated enemy,
if you gave death to my heart, give life to my song.

Sonnet Giovan Battista Marino (1569-1625), Rime 1602

Vago augelleto che cantando vai

Vago augelletto che cantando vai,
over piangendo, il tuo tempo passato,
vedendoti la notte e 'l verno a lato
e'l dì dopo le spalle e i mesi gai,
se, come i tuoi gravosi affanni sai,
così sapessi il mio simile stato,
verresti in grembo a questo sconsolato
a partir seco i dolorosi guai.

Pretty little bird, you who keep on singing,
or rather weeping, for the time that has passed,
as you see beside you night and winter
and behind you day and springtime,
you know of your own grievous woes,
and if you only knew that I was suffering likewise,
you would come to the breast of this poor wretch
to share with him your sorrowful laments.

Sonnet quatrains; Petrarch, Canzoniere

Ninfa che scalza il piede

Ninfa che scalza il piede e sciolta il crine

te ne vai di doglia in bando
per queste piagge lieta, cantando e ballando:
non scuoti a l'erbe le fresche brine.

Qui, deh, meco t'arresta, ove di fiori
s'inghirlanda il crin novello,
questo ch'imperla fresco
ruscello, bel pratello,
co' suoi correnti limpidi umori

De l'usate mie corde al suon potrai,
sotto l'ombra di quest'orno
a tempo il passo mover d'intorno
né del giorno
faran te bruna gl'ardenti rai.

Ma senza pur mirarmi affretta il passo

dietro forse a Lillo amato.
Ah! che ti possa veder cangiato quel piè ingrato,
fera fugace, in un duro sasso.
Canzonetta anon

Nymph, you who happily wander this place barefoot,
your hair flowing free,
untouched by sorrow, singing and dancing:

do not shake the cold frost from the grass.

Ah, stay here a while with me, here where
youthful tresses are garlanded with flowers,
in this lovely little meadow
strewn with pearls by the cool stream's
limpid, flowing waters.

You could dance
to the sound of my plucked strings
beneath the shade of this elm,
and the sun's fiery rays
would not turn your skin brown.

But without even looking at me she quickens her step,
perhaps in pursuit of her beloved Lillo.
Ah! if only, I could see your ungrateful feet my cruel runaway,
transformed into solid rock.

Dolcissimo uscignolo

Dolcissimo uscignolo,
tu chiami la tua cara compagnia
cantando: 'Vieni, vieni, anima mia'.
A me canto non vale,
e non ho come tu da volar ale.

O felice augelletto,
come nel tuo diletto
ti ricompensa ben l'alma natura:
se ti negò saver, ti diè ventura.

Giovanni Battista Guarini, Rime, 'Felicità d'usignolo'

Sweetest nightingale,
you call for your dear companion
by singing, 'Come, come, my beloved'.
Songs do not work for me,
and unlike you I have no wings on which to soar.
O happy little bird,
how in your happiness
generous nature rewards you:
if she denies you wisdom, she has given you joy.

Please turn the page quietly

LAMENTO DELLA NINFA

Non havea Febo ancora

Non havea Febo ancora
recato al mondo il dì,
ch'una donzella fuora
del proprio albergo uscì.
Sul pallidetto volto
scorgeasi il suo dolor:
spesso le venia sciolto
un gran sospir dal cor.
Sì calpestando fiori,
errava or qua or là,
i suoi perduti amori
così piangendo va.

Amor

'Amor', dicea, il ciel
mirando il piè fermò
'dove dov'è la fé
ch'el traditor giurò?'
Miserella, ahi più no, no
tanto gel soffrir non può.
'Fa che ritorni mio,
Amor com'ei pur fu,
o, tu m'ancidi, ch'io
non mi tormenti più.
Non vo' più ch'ei sospiri
se non lontan da me,
no, che i suoi martiri
più non dirammi a fé.
Perché di lui mi struggo?
Tutto orgoglioso sta,
che sì, che sì se'l fuggo
ch'ancor mi pregherà?
Se 'l ciglio ha più sereno
colei, che 'l mio non è,
già non rinchiude in seno,
Amor, sì bella fé.
Né mai sì dolci baci,

THE NYMPH'S LAMENT

Phoebus had not yet
returned daylight to the world
when a young maiden
stepped out of her dwelling.
Her grief was written
upon her pale features:
frequent were the sighs that came
from deep within her heart.
Yes, crushing the flowers beneath her feet,
she wandered this way and that,
and mournfully wept
thus over her lost love.

'Love', she said, as she stood still,
her gaze turned heavenward,
'where, oh where is the faith
the treacherous man swore to me?'
Poor girl, alas, no longer
can she bear such cold rejection.
'Love, make him mine again,
as he once was,
or kill me, that I may
no longer live in torment.
I do not want him to love
unless he is far from me,
no, he will no longer, I swear it,
tell me of his suffering.
Because I love him so,
he is nothing but vanity;
perhaps, if I run from him
he will want me again?
Her eyes may be
more beautiful than mine,
but, o love, her heart
is not as loyal as mine.
And never from her lips

da quella bocca avrà,
né più soave, ah, taci,
taci, che troppo il sa'.

Sì tra sdegnosi pianti,
spargea le voci al ciel:
così ne' cori amanti
mesce Amor, fiamm'e gel.
Canzonetta Ottavio Rinuccini, 'Dialogo. Pastorel qual duol t'accora'

will he get kisses as sweet,
nor as gentle as mine, ah, hush,
hush, he knows that all too well.'

Yes, as she wept bitter tears
her voice rose up to heaven:
thus in loving hearts
does love mingle fire and ice.

Translations by Susannah Howe reproduced with kind permission from Naxos

Cover image: Giovanni Battista Tiepolo *Rinaldo and Armida in Her Garden* (1742-45)

Photo © Mark Allan

Laurence Cummings

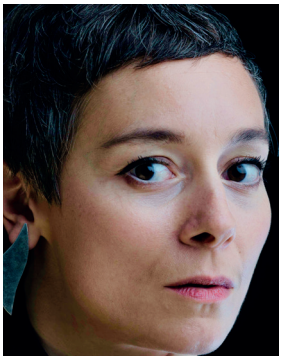
director & harpsichord

Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as a conductor and a harpsichord player. He is Music Director of Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música in Porto as well as AAM's Music Director, and celebrated his 25th and final year as Musical Director of the London Handel Festival in 2023.

Frequently praised for his stylish performances in the opera house, he has conducted productions across Europe at houses including Opernhaus Zürich, Theater an der Wien, Chatelet Paris and Gothenburg Opera. In the UK he has been a regular guest at English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Garsington Opera and Opera North. He made his main stage debut at Royal Opera House conducting Handel's *Jephtha* in 2023.

Equally at home on the concert platform, he is regularly invited to conduct both period and modern orchestras worldwide, including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The English Concert, Handel and Haydn Society Boston, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Jerusalem Symphony, and in the UK with Hallé Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and Royal Scottish National Orchestra.
His recordings include discs with Emma Kirkby and Royal Academy of Music on BIS, Angelika Kirschlager and the Basel Chamber Orchestra for Sony BMG, Maurice Steger and The English Concert for Harmonia Mundi, as well as a series of live performances for Accent recorded at the Göttingen International Handel Festival where he was Artistic Director from 2011-21. He has also released numerous solo harpsichord recital and chamber music recordings for Naxos.

Until 2012 he was Head of Historical Performance at the Royal Academy of Music and is now the William Crotch Professor of Historical Performance. Laurence was awarded an OBE for services to Music in the New Year Honours List 2024.



Anna Dennis

soprano

Anna Dennis studied at the Royal Academy of Music and was the recipient of the 2023 Royal Philharmic Society's Singer award.

Her opera performances have included Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* at Drottningholms Slottsteater in Stockholm, Queen of the NIght in Mozart's *Magic Flute* for Opera North, Handel's *Rodelinda* at the Göttingen Handel Festspiel, and roles in all three Monteverdi operas during John Eliot Gardiner's world tour of the trilogy. She recently created the title role of Violet in Tom Coult's debut opera, premiered at the Aldeburgh festival.

Recent concert highlights have included performing Boulez' *Pli Selon Pli* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican's centenary celebration of the composer, Haydn's *Jahreszeiten* with Düsseldorfer Sinfoniker under Adam Fischer, and Handel's *Orlando* with AAM. This season she sings the title role in Handel's *Susanna* for Opera North; Thomas Ades's *America: A Prophecy* with both the New York Philharmonic and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra; and the premiere of Tansy Davies's *Passion of Mary Magdalene* at the Edinburgh International Festival.

Ed Lyon

tenor

Ed Lyon performs repertoire ranging from baroque to contemporary. He appears in leading opera houses including Covent Garden, Glyndebourne, Bayerische Staatsoper, Netherlands Opera, Teatro Real, La Monnaie, and at festivals including Edinburgh, Aix, Salzburg, Aldeburgh and BBC Proms.

Opera highlights include Lurcanio (*Ariodante*), Septimius (*Theodora*) and Walther (*Tannhäuser*) for Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; the title role in *Candide* for Welsh National Opera, Septimius and Jacquino (*Fidelio*) in Madrid; Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*) and the title role in *Orfeo*) for Garsington; Ferdinand (Miranda) for Oper Köln; Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) at La Monnaie, Brussels; Alessandro (Eliogabolo) for Netherlands Opera and the title role in *La Clemenza di Tito* in concert for the Opéra de Rouen.

Concert highlights have included tours worldwide with Les Arts Florissants, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Monteverdi Choir and John Eliot Gardiner in Europe and US, as well as repertoire including *The Dream of Gerontius* with the RPO, Britten's *War Requiem*, *The Apostles* with The Hallé, Evangelist in both Bach passions and *Messiah* with orchestras all over the world.

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At AAM we don't use ordinary musical instruments. We aim to use the types of instruments that were around at the time the composers were writing the music we play. Through hands-on engagement with this ancient technology we believe this adds a freshness to our music-making and allows us to bring out details in the music which might be obscured by today's modern technology.

Leo Duarte, AHRC Research Fellow

The **violin family** evolved into a recognisable form in the middle of the 16th century. Instruments such as the medieval fiddle had been used to play dance music in the previous centuries but makers experimented with different sizes of instruments and created consorts with larger and smaller instruments until around 1650. The Italians standardised models with four strings tuned in fifths, and began to exploit the instruments' potential outside of dance music. The violin's body length was the first to become standardised around 1700, the viola varied in size between c38-c48cm. Cellos eventually became standardised at c75cm around the start of the 19th century but previously had varied in size between c53-c80cm. Today, cello-shaped instruments with a larger body are often called 'bass violins' in order to distinguish them from the cello.

Baroque bows were convex in shape and were strung with horsehair. Their lengths varied from shorter and lighter bows, facilitating a more articulate style, to longer and heavier models which encouraged a more singing style and allowed an easier exploitation of a wide dynamic range. Bow design underwent significant changes through the 18th century with the stick gradually growing more parallel to the hair and eventually a concave model, very similar to modern-day bows, was developed by the French Tourte family at the end of the century.

The **strings** themselves were made of animal gut, which gave the sound a more rounded quality when compared to modern steel strings. During the course of the 18th century, players began to experiment with winding a layer of metal over the gut core which, according to an English commentator, sounded, 'much better and lowder'.

The **playing position** of the violin and viola was less uniform than it has become today. Many players rested the instrument somewhere on the chest or against the collar-bone instead of gripping it underneath the chin, a position which has no need of supporting structures such as chin- or shoulder-rests. The cello was usually held between the legs without the support of a spike. Baroque violins, violas and cellos have a shorter fingerboard which is less steeply angled away from the body and a bridge which is lower and less rounded than on modern instruments, though by the end of the 18th century these fittings reached proportions which have remained largely unchanged.

AAM's leader, Bojan Čičić, plays a 1701 violin by G Tononi of Bologna.

The **viola da gamba** is thought to have evolved in Spain in the 15th century from a plucked guitar-like instrument called the vihuela. Instruments spread across the Mediterranean and, in Italy, underwent significant changes, particularly the addition of an arched bridge. During the 16th century its shape became characterised by sloping shoulders, a deep body with a flat back, and a curved, fretted fingerboard. The bow was drawn across the strings using an underhand bow hold, different to that commonly used for the violin family.

The viol was built in several different sizes, treble, tenor and bass being usual, and had six strings, though the bass viol, commonly known today as the viola da gamba, had a lower, seventh string added by the French virtuoso Saint-Colombe in the last quarter of the 17th century. The smaller members of the family disappeared over the course of the 17th century as the fashion for consort music dwindled. However, the bass viol remained in use as late as the 1770s, largely due to its popularity as a solo instrument but also, initially, as a member of the *basso continuo* team in larger ensembles.

First documented in 1589 when it was played at a grand Medici wedding in Florence, the **theorbo** evolved from the bass lute and had several sets, or courses, of double-strings which were stopped by the left hand on a fretted fingerboard. In addition, a set of long bass strings, so-called *diapasons*, were added. These strings could not be stopped by the player but were tuned to a scale allowing bass notes to be sounded with more strength and resonance.

The theorbo was commonly used to accompany voices and also inspired a substantial solo repertory. In larger ensembles it became a member of the *basso continuo* team, helping to strengthen the bass and harmony. The theorbo spread quickly across Europe and, in 1605, Inigo Jones first brought the theorbo to England. Its outlandish appearance so shocked the officials at Dover that they thought it was 'some Engine brought from Popish cuntris to destroy the King'!

The **harpsichord** developed in the late-14th century, most likely in Northern Europe. The defining feature of this keyboard instrument is the plucking action on the strings. The key, controlled by the player's finger, raises a jack which houses a quill. This quill plucks the string as it passes upwards, and pivots away silently from the string on the way down thanks to a connecting sprung axel. Finally the string is damped by a piece of cloth at the top of the jack. The strings themselves were made either from brass or iron.

A second keyboard, or manual, was often added to instruments around the end of the 16th century which allowed a second set of strings, tuned an octave higher, to be played independently. In the middle of the 17th century, French makers added a third set of strings tuned to the same notes as the lower octave. Plucked further down the length of the string, this created a subtly softer sound. Makers also found ways of coupling the keyboards so that single keys could sound each string-set individually or in combination.

The latest surviving harpsichord was made in 1800 after which the piano became the most prevalent keyboard instrument.

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Anna Gustafson, Academy member

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