

EARLY MUSIC
NEW YORK

FREDERICK RENZ
DIRECTOR

*CAPRICIOUS
EXTRAVAGANCE*

AUDACIOUS COMPOSERS
TO THE
AUSTRIAN IMPERIAL COURT

SAINT JAMES' CHURCH

MADISON AVENUE AT
71ST STREET

34th SEASON

Saturday, 14 March 2009

Early Music Foundation presents

EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK

Baroque Orchestra

FREDERICK RENZ – DIRECTOR

HEIDI POWELL - *concert master*

DONGMYUNG AHN - *principal violin II*

AARON BROWN - *violin*

RICHARD HSU - *violin*

MARC LEVINE - *violin*

MARIKA HOLMQVIST - *violin & viola*

THERESA SALOMON - *violin & viola*

RACHEL EVANS - *principal alto viola*

CHRISTOPHER NUNN - *principal tenor viola*

DAVID BAKAMJIAN - *principal violoncello*

ANDRE O'NEIL - *violoncello*

DAVID CHAPMAN – *violone da gamba &
double bass violone*

GONZALO RUIZ - *oboe I*

VIRGINIA BREWER - *oboe II*

JAMES KOPP - *bassoon*

DONGSOK SHIN - *harpsichord*

with SCOTT DISPENZA - *baritone*



- *program* -

SERENADA, *ca.* 1670

HEINRICH IGNAZ FRANZ BIBER
(1644-1704)

[Intrada]

Allemanda

Aria

Ciacona: *Nachtwächterlied* (Nightwatchman's Song)

Gavotte

Retirada

FECHTSCHULE, 1668

JOHANN HEINRICH SCHMELZER
(1623-1680)

Aria I

Aria II

Sarabande

Courente

Fechtschule (Fencing School)

Bader Aria (Barber's Aria)

SONATA V
(from *Armonico Tributo*, 1682)

GEORG MUFFAT
(1653-1704)

Allemanda

Adagio

Fuga

Adagio

Passagaglia

- *interval* -

CAPRICCIO STRAVAGANTE, 1627
(from *Libro delle Pavane*, Dresden)

CARLO FARINA
(ca.1600-1640)

[Intrada]
La lira (The hurdy-gurdy [*vielle à rue*])
Il piferino (The small shawm)
Lira variata (Hurdy-gurdy variation)
Qui si bate con il legno del archetto sopra le corde
(Here one strikes the bow on the strings)
Adagio
Presto
Adagio
La trombetta (The trumpet)
La clarion (The clarion [*high*] trumpet)
Adagio
La gallina (The hen)
Il gallo (The rooster)
Presto
Il flautino pian piano (The small flute very softly)
Forte
Presto
Adagio
Il tremulanto (The 'tremulant' [*stop of the organ*])
Fiferino della soldatesca (Soldier's fife)
Il gatto (The cat)
Il cane (The dog)
Presto
La chitarra spagniola (The Spanish guitar)
Adagio – Sempre piu adagio
Il fine

OUVERTURE, ca.1700

JOHANN JOSEPH FUX
(1660-1741)

[Ouverture] – Adagio/Presto/Adagio
Pour le rossignol (For the nightingale)
Menuet
Passepied (trio)
Air – Adagio
Gigue
Pour la caille (For the quail)
Pour le coucou (For the cuckoo)



NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

THE HABSBURG EMPERORS were among the most lavish patrons of music of the German/Austrian baroque period. Under Emperors Ferdinand II (r.1619-37), Ferdinand III (r.1637-57), and Leopold I (r.1657-1705), the imperial court at Vienna boasted some of the largest music chapels in Europe. This program reflects the striking attributes of the Habsburgs' secular musical tastes. The most obvious aspect of the Habsburgs' cultivation of music was the penchant for Italian composers and Italianate music. Throughout their reigns the Habsburgs—titular heads of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation—relied almost exclusively on musicians recruited from Italy. Italian performers dominated the imperial music chapel, and all of Ferdinand II's and Ferdinand III's chapel masters came from Italy.

The height of artistic activity throughout the court of the Habsburg Empire was reached in the later years of the reign of Charles VI (1711-40), but the preceding century saw an escalation of tremendous influence on the arts. Music was firmly built into the structure of court life and the Habsburgs, particularly in the baroque period, welcomed musical innovation, and new works were used alongside ancient music.

HEINRICH IGNAZ FRANZ BIBER was born in Wartenberg (now in the Czech Republic). He received his first position in 1668 as musician in the court of Archbishop at Olmutz. The famous violin maker at the time, Jakob Stainer, wrote of him “der vortreffliche Virtuos (the outstanding virtuoso) Herr Biber.” He was first a violinist at the castle of Kromeríz, and in 1684 became Kapellmeister in Salzburg, where he died twenty years later.

Biber's music exemplifies the Austrian baroque style, which is a combination of Italian and German influences. His works show a style that pre-dates the later baroque works of Johann Pachelbel and Johann Sebastian Bach. As a virtuoso, he is best known for his highly virtuosic and expressive violin works and his music has enjoyed a renaissance, in part, because of the Rosary Sonatas, also known as the Mystery Sonatas - each sonata employing a unique violin tuning (*scordatura*).

In his violin music Biber built on the achievements of earlier Italian violinist-composers such as Marini, Fontana, and Uccellini, as well as his older Austrian contemporary Johann Heinrich Schmelzer.

Nightwatchman's Song

*Listen everyone and hear it said:
the hammer strikes the ninth hour,
all's safe, all's well.*

*Praise to God the Father
and to Our Lady.*

*Listen everyone and hear it said:
the hammer strikes the tenth hour,
all's safe, all's well.*

*Praise to God the Father
and to Our Lady.*

JOHANN HEINRICH VON SCHMELZER (1620/23-1680) worked in Vienna and died in Prague where he distinguished himself as the first non-Italian Kapellmeister at the Habsburg court in many years. He was the foremost Austrian composer of instrumental music of his day, and had an important influence on the Austrian violinist and composer Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber (1644-1704), who is believed to have been one of Schmelzer's students.

Schmelzer attained a high reputation in a field (violin playing and violin composition) which at the time was dominated by Italians; indeed, one traveler referred to him in 1660 as “nearly the most eminent violinist in all of Europe.” Works that constitute loose suites of dance-related movements for four and five-part strings were extremely popular both at the Viennese court, where Schmelzer spent his career, and in Kromeriz and Salzburg, where Biber was engaged. Schmelzer’s works were probably intended for performance in royal circles in Vienna.

GEORG MUFFAT, of Scottish descent, was born in Savoy (now in France). He studied in Paris with Jean-Baptiste Lully between 1663 and 1669, and then became an organist in Molsheim and Sélestat. Later, he studied law in Ingolstadt, afterwards settling in Vienna. He could not land an official appointment there, so he traveled to Prague in 1677, then on to Salzburg, where he worked for the archbishop for some ten years. About 1680, he traveled to Italy to study the organ at which time he met Arcangelo Corelli, whose works he admired. From 1690 to his death, he was Kapellmeister to the bishop of Passau. Georg Muffat had a son, Gottlieb, who successfully composed for the keyboard.

A prominent composer of instrumental music, Georg Muffat was a pioneer in bringing French and Italian styles into Germany, and in the prefaces to his works he also gave details of Lully’s and Corelli’s performing practices. The first of his five publications, *Armonico tributo* (1682), contains five ensemble sonatas that owe much to Corelli’s *concerti grossi* opus VI while showing French features. Muffat drew on movements from *Armonico tributo* for his twelve *concerti grossi*, *Ausserlesene Instrumental-Music* (1701). The Passaglia of Sonata V was reworked and titled Ciaccona in the *concerti grossi* publication of 1701.

Muffat was a cosmopolitan composer who played an important role in the exchanges between European musical traditions. His music books contain useful indications on musical practice during his life. In the introduction to one of his publications, in which concertos were published, Muffat openly acknowledged his debt to both the *concerti grossi* of Corelli and the French ballet music of Lully. Such works as this, he said, were not suitable for dancing or for performance in church; rather, since they were written “primarily for the amusement of great princes and gentlemen and the entertainment of distinguished guests,” they should be performed “most fittingly at the splendid banquets, serenades, and gatherings of music lovers and virtuosos.”

Ensemble music composed in this period were intended mainly for strings but Muffat advised “If some of your musicians can play the French oboe or shawm well, you can form the concertino or trio with two of the best of these instead of the two violins, and with a good bassoonist instead of the small bass (violone), and successfully use this group in certain concertos or selected Arias...” Muffat stayed in his post at Passau until his death.

CARLO FARINA (ca. 1600 - ca.1640). Virtuoso violin techniques informed Farina’s music, performance and place in history. He received his first lessons presumably by his father, who was *sonatore di viola* at the court of the Gonzagas in Mantua. Later he received further education probably by Salomone Rossi and Giovanni Battista Buonamente. From 1626 to 1629, he worked as concertmaster in Dresden. There he worked with Heinrich Schütz, who inspired him in composing. While in Dresden, he published five books of music for two to four instruments and continuo, pavans, galliards and other dances, with sonatas, sinfonias, canzonas and programmatic pieces (1626-8). His compositions exude exceptional qualities of lucid technical direction, requisite virtuosity, showmanship and imagination.

From 1629 to 1631, he was a prominent member of the electoral court orchestra in Bonn, until he returned to Italy, where he worked in Parma and later in Lucca until 1635. In 1635 he held position at the court of the Prince of Massa and between 1636 and 1637 in Danzig. From 1638 he lived in Vienna, where he died of the plague probably a year later.

Capriccio stravagante is an elaborate, four-voice *canzona* or pastiche that demonstrates the imitative potential of the violin including an unprecedented and elaborate use of the G (lowest) string. In this programmatic music, the violin imitates dogs barking, cats fighting, roosters crowing, drummers drumming, etc.

JOHANN JOSEPH FUX (1660-1741) was, for a long time, remembered only as a theorist. His treatise *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1725) was studied by many important composers in the 18th and 19th centuries and had an enormous influence on the preservation of a strict style of composition traced back to Palestrina in the 16th century (hence Fux's nickname, 'the Austrian Palestrina'). Bach had a copy in his library. Haydn largely taught himself counterpoint by reading it and recommended it to the young Beethoven. Mozart had a copy that he annotated. Fux's treatise governed the teaching of the subject well into the 20th century.

Fux was in fact the most distinguished Austrian composer of his time, and held the highest positions a musician could attain: he was Hofcompositor at the imperial court, then Vice-Hofkapellmeister, and finally, from 1715 onwards, Hofkapellmeister. He wrote a great deal of important church music, some chamber music, and a remarkable succession of operas, most of which were first performed at the Hoftheater in Vienna. He was born near Graz, of peasant stock, and studied with the Jesuits. He probably visited Italy, where he may have encountered Corelli, or at least may have been influenced by his

music. While in the employ of an Austrian archbishop, he was noticed by the Emperor Leopold I, who appointed him over the heads of more likely candidates as Hofcompositor. As well as serving at the court, Fux was also involved in the provision of music for St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, becoming Kapellmeister there in 1712. His fame spread far afield: when J. S. Bach's first biographer, Forkel, asked Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel which composers his father admired, Fux came first on the list. Fux's contemporary J. A. Scheibe wrote that "Fux, although he was the most profound contrapuntalist, nevertheless possessed the skill of writing lightly, appealingly and naturally, as his theatrical works show."

Because of the nature of his overtures—none tied to a specific event—it is impossible to date them with any certainty. But it is conjectured that they were written around 1700, a period which saw him as imperial court composer to Leopold I and the time he assumed the position of music director of St. Stephen's Cathedral, elevating him further in the imperial echelon.



EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK FREDERICK RENZ - DIRECTOR

Early Music New York, founded in 1974, performs music and music drama from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as well as orchestral repertoire of the Baroque and classical periods. EM/NY is in virtual artistic residence at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, New York, where it presents an annual subscription concert series. Profiled on award-winning national news programs ABC News *Nightline* and CBS News *Sunday Morning*, EM/NY has regularly toured throughout the United States and abroad performing to critical acclaim in return engagements at international festivals including Athens, Brisbane, Caramoor, Charleston, Edinburgh, Hong Kong, Ilmajoki, Jerusalem, Kraków, Paris, Ravinia, Regensburg, Rome, San Antonio, Spoleto, and Tokyo. Since its inception Early Music New York has presented numerous concerts and produced recordings of repertoire appropriate to the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



FREDERICK RENZ, EM/NY's Director and the founder of the Early Music Foundation (EMF), has for four decades researched and performed music and music drama from the eleventh through the eighteenth centuries. Internationally acclaimed for his work as a conductor, producer, director, and performer, Renz has received commissions from the Spoleto Festival, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Ingram Merrill Foundation, and an honorary doctorate from the State University of New York.

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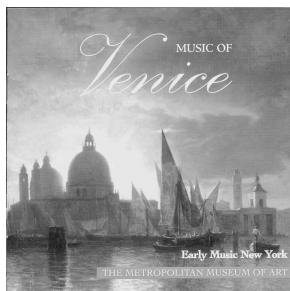
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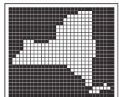


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EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK performances are made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

