



Ensemble Jupiter

Friday 12 July 2019 20:00

Hindsgavl Festival

Artistic direction and lute: **Thomas Dunford**

Organ/Harpsichord: **Jean Rondeau**

Mezzo-soprano: **Lea Desandre**

Bassoon: **Peter Whelan**

Violins: **Théotime Langlois de Swarte,**
Sophie Gent

Viola: **Jérôme Van Waerbeke**

Violoncello: **Bruno Philippe**

Bas: **Douglas Balliet**

*Thanks for assistance with harpsichord by harpsichord
builder Erik Kristiansen, www.cembalo.dk*

WORKS BY ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678 – 1741)

"Vedro con mio diletto" from the opera
Giustino, RV 717 (1724)

"Armatae face et anguibus" (3'30) from the
oratorio Juditha triumphans RV 644 (1716)

**Concerto in G minor for bassoon, strings and
basso continuo, RV 495, (11'30)**

I. Presto - II. Largo - III. Allegro

"Cum dederit" (4'30) psalm from Nisi
Dominus, RV 608

"Veni, veni me sequere fida" (7') from the
oratorio Judita Triumphans, RV 644 (1716)

----- *Entracte* -----

**Concerto in D major for lute, two violins and
basso continuo (10'), RV 93**

I. [No tempo direction.] - II. Largo - III. Allegro

"Gelido in ogni vena"(9') from the opera "Il
Farnace", RV 711 (1727)

Concerto for cello in G minor, RV 416 (10')

"Gelosia, tu già rendi l'anima mia" (3'10) from
the opera "Ottone in Villa", RV 729 (1713)

"Mentre dormi" (7'40) from the musical
drama L'Olimpiade, RV 725 (1734)

"Agitata da due venti" (5'30) from the
musical drama Griselda, RV 718 (1735)

Vivaldi:

Selected arias and concerts

Vivaldi wasn't always considered to be one of the most famous composers in music history. After his death he was completely forgotten. It wasn't until the 1930s when a big collection of his music was found in an Italian convent that he was rediscovered. Music scholars are still searching for new works by Vivaldi. On his deathbed he is said to have reeled off all of his 90 operas.

But today we only know about 50. Apart from his operas, Vivaldi is known for his almost 400 violin concertos and 100 other concertos for many different instruments, including cello and bassoon. His style is special and sweeps us along. Vivaldi always

seeks to expand his musical limits in his tense, energetic and inventive compositions.

The opera *Il Giustino* from 1724 is based on historical characters, like in most of the operas from the same period. In the aria **Vedro con mio diletto**, the Byzantine emperor Anastasio describes his longing for his wife when he's off to war. The beautiful melody is built on a *Sarabande*-dance from the nobility.

The story in the oratorio *Juditha triumphans* from 1716 is taken from the *Book of Judith* from the Old Testament. The Assyrian chief commander Holofernes is leading an attack on the Israelites. During the siege, the brave Judith seduces Holofernes and kills him with his own sword and stops the attack. In the fiery aria **Armatae face et anguibus**, Judith describes how she will revenge Holofernes' atrocities.

Vivaldi composed 39 Bassoon-concertos – more than any other composer. We have no idea why Vivaldi was so enthusiastic about the bassoon (or dulcian, as the forerunner for the bassoon is called), but today his concertos are considered the crown jewels in the bassoon repertoire. Short, concise and gripping works, not at all easy for the soloist. The Bassoon Concerto in G minor RV495 consists of two energetic and extremely virtuosic movements, with a sorrowful and deeply moving second movement in the middle.

Nisi Dominus is the name of a motet in nine parts for mezzosoprano and orchestra from the late 1730s over the *Psalms 127* from the *Book of Psalms* (*Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it*). The movement **Cum dederit** (*for so he giveth his beloved sleep*) is a gentle, rocking *Siciliano*, the usual way to compose arias about sleep.

The aria **Veni, veni me sequere fida** from *Juditha triumphans* is an example of Vivaldi's musical originality with the chirping imitation of the song of the turtle-dove.

The Lute Concerto in D major RV 93 is probably more famous in Denmark than the musicians in Ensemble Jupiter can know. The beautiful second movement was the signature tune of the Danish Television programme *Dus med dyrene* in the 1980s. The virtuosic first and last movements dance along. In the first movement the singing opening motive is juxtaposed with a more lyrical theme in minor. The third movement is a quick *Tarantella*.

The opera *Il Farnace* tells the story about King Farnaces of Pontus who has been defeated by the Romans. He orders his wife to kill herself and their son in order not to be captured. In the aria **Gelido in ogni vena** Farnaces prepares his own suicide. The music is tremblingly cold with descending scales, emphasizing Farnaces' sorrow and desperation.

Vivaldi composed at least 29 cello concertos. The **Cello Concerto in G minor RV416** is among the earliest and probably written in 1711. The first movement begins surprisingly dramatic with a grand main theme and a virtuosic solo-cello part. The beautiful second movement remains in the sorrowful key of G minor before the fiery last movement.

Vivaldi's earliest opera, *Ottone in Villa* from 1713 is a drama full of complications about emperor Ottone's lover *Cleonilla* who's also worshipped by two other men. One of these, however, is a disguised woman, wanting to disclose the shady love relations. In the aria **Gelosia, tu già rendi l'alma mia** the male suitor fulminates against faithlessness.

In the opera *L'Olimpiade* from 1734, Prince Licida tells his friend Megakles about his love for Aristeia. Licida is not aware that that Megakles loves the same woman. In the aria **Mentre dormi** Licida wishes that his friend will be able to sleep in peace, now that he knows about Licida's feelings. The feeling of a pleasant sleep is assisted by the softly rocking music.

The musical drama *Griselda* tells about King Gualtiero who has married the shepherdess Griselda. Because of the population's indignation, Gualtiero tells everybody that his and Griselda's daughter is dead. But in reality she's growing up with foster-parents and doesn't know herself that she's a princess. Later when Gualtiero is being forced to re-marry, it's being decided that his bride shall be his unknown daughter. In the aria **Agitata da due venti** the daughter sings about her powerlessness and resentment against having to marry another man than the one she loves (who is her own father!)

Text: Mathias Hammer
English translation: Susanne Lange

Ensemble Jupiter

If historically performance practise was a person one could argue that it has moved beyond puberty, but still is quite young. It has by now loads of good-will from increasingly larger audiences.

Nevertheless it has now reached a new level of maturity. Until very recent, a constellation like Ensemble Jupiter seemed almost impossible. Contrary to the traditional music scene, where it's quite normal to see a group of younger hotshots – each an established star on his/her own instrument - come

together and play their favourites among the musical masterpieces, without having to include one of the older members of the business in the group.

The early music scene has been lucky with their pioneers – and every one of tonight's musicians has worked with the best of them – but it's promising (and about time, one would think) that a new generation steps onto the podium themselves without fear and just want to play chamber music.

The ensemble is built up around **Thomas Dunford**, lutenist *extraordinaire*, but he's not an old man, neither in years nor in looks. His wish was to create that special free space where you play together with people you like, and where you allow yourself the musical freedom which you can't always have with a lot of other people.

That's why Dunford's two closest musical partners, Jean Rondeau and **Lea Desandre**, are part of Ensemble Jupiter. The mezzosoprano Desandre is only in her middle 20s but is already more like the queen of the French baroque-scene, than its crown princess. To hear such a big voice pour out from such a slim body seems almost against nature. If you take Desandre to be a ballerina when you first see her, you're not quite wrong either. Like the rest of the Ensemble she is a multi-talent and has been doing ballet classes during her studies as a singer.

With regards to **Jean Rondeau**, his greatest gift is of course his talent, but number two on that list is probably his 10-years study with the legendary French harpsichord-player Blandine Verlet. He certainly has that same kind of freedom in his playing as she had. A freedom he also uses as a jazz pianist in his own ensemble Note Forget.

But **Douglas Baillet**, playing the bass and coming from New York, is the most versatile member of the ensemble. His career has taken him from Ensemble Modern and Les Arts Florissant (the best in both the new music and Baroque scenes) to touring with the pop band Pink Martini. Together with his twin-brother Brad, he's a member of The Oracle Hysterical who performs hip-hop-operas, rap-cantatas and art rock-song cycles! And he's a poet and radio presenter.

But of course, there are other ways of showing your range. And if you are only interested in baroque music, you'll probably not have heard about **Bruno Phillipe** before and thus you have missed one of the more recent and spectacular careers. 26 years old, a CD-contract with Harmonia Mundi and being on the front page of *The Strad*. However, it's no longer unheard of to see such a shooting star put gut strings on his cello and join a real baroque ensemble for a day, to be a guest soloist. What's unusual is to see the same shooting star on stage both before and after the cello concerto and join the rest of the ensemble, playing in the continuo group as if he had always been doing just that. The egos seem all very small in this band made out of soloists. This chap Dunford must really be on to something.

The rest of the string players all belong to the regular baroque scene. **Sophie Gent** has already visited Hindsgavl with Arcangelo, and **Théotime Langlois de Swarte** is the youngest member and wunderkind with Les Arts Florissant. Like the two others, **Jérôme van Waebeke** is a violinist, but he also masters other kinds of string instruments, not least the very old ones, like the only apple violin in the world, but also the more well-known viola. In *Pygmalion* he plays both violin and viola, in *Jupiter* he *is* the viola group and a very fine one as well.

Last but not least – among all these string instruments – we have The Proud Bassoon, **Peter Whelan**. That was the title of his first solo-CD (The Gramophone called it “*a triumph*”), but it's probably also a message to the public, a declaration, maybe even a peaceful declaration of war. At least towards the traditional view that the bassoon is the funny guy in an orchestra, its clown – a notion which actually doesn't go back very far. Whelan has been the key to unlocking this annoying situation by bringing back the lyrical, virtuoso, sensible, heroic, and also proud bassoon to our attention. Somebody said about Whelan, that if he had chosen to play on a more glamorous instrument, he would be world-famous. That would have been a pity for the bassoon, music and us.

Text: Ulrik Damgaard Andersen
English translation: Susanne Lange

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