

The San Diego Early Music Society

presents



Musica ad Rhenum

The Apotheosis of Beauty: Chamber works
by Telemann and Francois Couperin

Jed Wentz • flauto traverso
Igor Rubhadze • Baroque violin
Cassandra Luckhardt • viola da gamba
Job ter Haar • violoncello
Michael Borgstede • harpsichord



Friday, November 20, 2009

8:00 p.m.

St. James by-the-Sea
743 Prospect Street, La Jolla



PROGRAM



Concerto in D major from *Quadri* (Hamburg, 1730) Georg Philipp Telemann
Allegro
Andante
Vivace

Vingt-Cinquième Ordre from *Quatrième Livre de pieces de Clavecin* (Paris, 1730) . . .Francois Couperin
La Visionaire
La Misterieuse
La Moflambert
La Muse Victorieuse
Les Ombres Errantes



Troisième Quatour in C₇ major from *Nouveaux Quatours en six suites* (Paris, 1738). . . C. P. Telemann
Prélude
Légèrement
Gracieusement
Vite
Modéré
Gai
Lentement-Vite-Lentement-Vite

— INTERMISSION —

Le Parnasse ou l'Apothéose de Corelli (Paris, 1724) F. Couperin
Corelli au pied du Parnasse
Corelli charmé de la bonne reception
Corelli bouvant a la source
Enthouziasme de Corelli
Corelli après son enthouziasme Les Muses reveillent Corelli
Remerciement de Corelli

12ième Concert from *Les Goûts-Rénuis* (Paris, 1724). F. Couperin
Pointé-coulé
Badinage
Lentement et pateliliquement
Air

Suite in b minor from *Nouveaux Quatours en six suites* (Paris, 1738) C. P. Telemann
Prélude
Coulant
Gai
Vite
Triste
Menuet

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- Please be sure to turn off any electronic devices that could make noise during the performance.
 - No videotaping or recording without express permission from the performers.
 - You are warmly invited to join us for a reception in the Van Schaik room following tonight's concert.
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PROGRAM NOTES

Georg Philipp Telemann and François Couperin were both composers of fame in their own day, far surpassing that of their contemporary, J. S. Bach; but today, our appreciation for Bach's extraordinary talents and style have dimmed their reputations. They seem lesser talents, smaller stars whose light pales next to that of Johann Sebastian's blazing sun. This current assessment of their merits tells us much, not about them, but about ourselves and our own standards of taste: listening to Telemann and Couperin can awaken us to the kinds of musical beauties which were prized and appreciated by an earlier time.

So what was it that contemporaries heard in the music of these two supposedly lesser composers? Grace, charm, and above all, wit; these were qualities savored by the upper classes in the 18th century. But there is more to Telemann's music, and Couperin's as well, than just facile, fashionable amusement. Both composers also showed real depth of feeling, and an extraordinary knowledge of the science of music in their compositions. Today's program offers a taste of all of these qualities which made them so popular in their own day, and which continue to make the performance of their music a joy.

The two suites *en quatuor* by Telemann were written for Paris, and published there just prior to Telemann's arrival on the Seine. They were performed in Paris by the best players of the day, and caused a sensation. Telemann was German, but he could compose perfectly in the French style; indeed, some contemporaries felt he could compose French music better than the French themselves! Although the two suites are similar in terms of structure (both contain a prelude followed by typically French dance movements), they have very different characters: the C major is extroverted and gay, with a raucous Polish folk dance adding an exotic, humorous touch, while the b minor suite is melancholy and introverted. These suites were designed to allow each of the three solo instruments (traverso, violin, and violoncello/gamba) a chance to shine. The constant exchange of musical material between them was an imitation of the elegant, witty conversation of the day. Here we have the ideals of a civilized society like that of Enlightenment France transformed into a web of shimmering sound.

Couperin's harpsichord music also shimmers. The movements chosen from his 25th harpsichord suite (which he idiosyncratically called *Ordres*) admirably displays his ability to make the instrument sing and sparkle. But the last movement, entitled "Wandering Ghosts," is full of deep foreboding: its melancholy character reminds us that Couperin's final years were unhappy. Constant illness had not broken his spirit, nor dimmed his ear; but his sorrows became more audible in his music with the passing years.

Very different is the charming suite for two bass instruments from *Les Goûts-Réunis*. Here Couperin exploits the beautiful timbres of these instruments in a work of charm and grace. There are no traces of depression in this little suite, just that lightness of touch and good humor that French society prized so highly.

Today's program gives the heroes of the eighteenth century a chance to speak, without comparison to the mighty J. S. Bach's music. It is remarkable that, though today some feel we must take sides and choose one aesthetic above another, Bach knew and admired the music of both Telemann and Couperin. In fact, rumor has it that they all exchanged letters: we know that Bach and Telemann were friends – after all, Telemann stood as godfather to C.P.E. Bach! But there is also an unsubstantiated legend that Bach and Couperin corresponded. In fact, these lost letters, which would have made fascinating reading for us, are said to have ended up covering jars of homemade jam! But this is most likely just a sweet ending to an apocryphal tale.

– Rex Snowe

Musica ad Rhenum has, since its founding in 1992, created a devoted following in the musical world. The intensely personal and highly emotional style which characterizes the performances of the group has earned them a special place on the early music scene. "Exhilarating," "controversial," "virtuoso," and "cutting-edge"

are words which critics have used to describe the highly-charged atmosphere the group has created in concert at festivals and halls throughout Europe, North and South America, Iceland, Israel, and Japan.

Blending an informed historical perspective with a lively artistic spirit, balancing the intentions of the composer against the needs of the creative performer, Musica ad Rhenum aims to make an impact on the audience, to move, amuse and delight them, through the music itself. The essence of the artistic experience, the meeting of minds separated by centuries, the moving of passions felt by hearts now turned to dust, needs no frivolous trappings, no gimmicks. Musica ad Rhenum is convinced, and has convinced audiences around the world, that Baroque music is as strong, expressive and free as the performers themselves, and as relevant to the world today as it was when first composed.

With more than 30 CDs on the market, with prizes and recommendations to their credit and repeated invitations to perform in the most prestigious venues, Musica ad Rhenum has proven its merit. The group has performed at festivals in York, London, Graz, Antwerp, Madrid, Berlin, and Utrecht, and on the concert series of Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Frick Museum New York, Wigmore Hall London, Philharmonie Berlin, and both Musikhaus and Musikverein Vienna. The core activity of the group is the performance of 18th-century chamber music. Most recently the group has specialized in French music, which they approach with the enthusiasm, style, and sense of fun which characterizes all their work. Their success with this repertoire can perhaps be judged by their 2004 recording of the complete chamber music of François Couperin, which has been highly praised in the press and has sold more than 20,000 copies. However, Musica ad Rhenum is not solely a chamber music group. Traverso-player and founder Jed Wentz also conducts the orchestral formation in large-scale works. Recent recordings and staged performances of operas by Mozart, Purcell, and Handel have been hailed by critics for their verve and freshness. Whether the repertoire be intimate chamber music or grand, tragic opera, a concert by Musica ad Rhenum is not soon to be forgotten.

Jed Wentz began his flute studies with Walter Mayhall in Youngstown, Ohio, and continued studying with James Walker in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He studied modern and historical flutes at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music with Robert Willoughby and Michael Lynn, and received a Soloist's Diploma from the Royal Conservatory in The Hague after three years with Barthold Kuijken. He has performed and recorded with groups such as Musica Antiqua Köln, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Capriccio Stravagante Paris, and the Gabrielli Consort. In 1992 he founded Musica ad Rhenum, with whom he has recorded more than 20 CDs both as flutist and conductor. His recording of the complete flute sonatas of Locatelli was awarded the prize for the Best Recording of Italian Music 1995 by the Fondazione Cini Venetia. Mr. Wentz teaches at the Amsterdam Conservatory of Music, and lectures regularly on performance practice at the Royal Academy of Music in London. He has published articles in *Early Music*, *Concerto*, and *Tijdschrift voor Oude Muziek*. He is pursuing his doctorate through Leiden University, with his research centering on the relationship between 18th-century staging and tempo in the *tragedie en musique*.

Igor Ruhadze graduated from the Moscow Central Music School and the Moscow State Conservatory with distinction in violin. He continued his studies at the Amsterdam Conservatory, graduating *cum laude* as a specialist in early music. As a member of the Taneyev Trio he was awarded the first prize, as well as a special prize for best trio of the competition, at the International Taneyev Chamber Music Competition in 1996. He also won third prize at the Locatelli Baroque Violin International Competition in 1997, and in 1999 was awarded the Diploma of the Musica Antiqua competition in Brugge. In 1996 he was invited to join the Moscow Conservatory and the Moscow Central Music School as a solo violin teacher and from 2002 as Baroque violin and Baroque orchestra teacher as well. He has also been a visiting professor at the Amsterdam Conservatory.

Igor Ruhadze has performed in many European countries as well as the USA. He performs with different ensembles and musicians, such as Bart van Oort, Jed Wentz, Siebe Henstra, Bob van Asperen, Richard Egarr, Wilbert Hazelzet, Eric Hoeprich, and Alfredo Bernardini. He also performs regularly as concertmaster with various orchestras, including Musica Antiqua St. Petersburg, Musica ad Rhenum, Concerto Amsterdam, Florilegium, the chamber ensemble Van Swieten Society, as well as with his own group Concerto Moscow. Igor Ruhadze has recorded CDs with of chamber music and solo repertory for several labels, including Alpha, Etcetera, NM Classics, and Musica Sacrae.

Job ter Haar studied cello at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, Netherlands, with René van Ast, Lidewij Scheifes, and Anner Bijlsma. He also took master classes with Heinrich Schiff and Valentin Berlinsky. Following graduation, he specialized in the performance of chamber music of all periods and styles. With his various ensembles, including Musica ad Rhenum, the Van Swieten Society, the Ives Ensemble, and Trio Uccellini, he has recorded a large number of CDs and performed extensively in all corners of the globe. Job ter Haar also plays the lirone.

Michael Borgstede lives in Tel Aviv and works both as a harpsichordist and organist as well as Middle East correspondent for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung. As a soloist and member of the ensemble Musica ad Rhenum he has toured almost all European countries, the United States, Asia, South America, and the Middle East. Michael Borgstede regularly performs at venues like the Wigmore Hall in London, the Konzerthaus in Vienna, and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. While still a student at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague he won the Ben Weber Award and the York Early Music Competition. He has participated in more than twenty CD-productions, among which are the complete chamber music of Francois Couperin with the ensemble Musica ad Rhenum. Summer 2006 saw the release of the complete harpsichord music of Couperin on the Brilliant Classics label. In addition to his extensive concert activities Michael Borgstede is regularly holds master classes and lectures on controversial aspects of historical performance practice.

Since winning Best Individual Performer at the Van Wassenaer Competition for Early Music in Den Haag, in 1998, **Cassandra Luckhardt** has established an international reputation as a soloist, chamber and orchestral musician, and teacher on both cello and viola da gamba. In performance, Cassandra has played with the The Academy of Ancient Music, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Les Musiciens du Louvre, and as a gamba soloist with the King's Consort. As a chamber musician, Cassandra is in equally high demand, demonstrating her flexibility as both a cellist and gambist. She has performed all over Europe as well as in Japan, Iceland, the U.S., and throughout her adopted home of The Netherlands and has recently recorded the complete sonatas of J. S. Bach for viola da gamba and harpsichord.

Cassandra received her Bachelor of Music and her Bachelor of Arts degrees *cum laude* from Oberlin College, Ohio, in 1992 and her Master of Music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory in 1994. She moved to Paris in 1994 to study at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique under the auspices of a Harriet Hale Woolley grant, awarded that year to only three other artists in the United States. In 1996 she received third prize at the Early Music Competition for Ensembles in Bruges, and 1999 won the Public Prize at the Utrecht Early Music Festival. In 2001 Cassandra finished her studies at the Royal Conservatory in Den Haag, graduating with degrees on both viola da gamba and baroque cello.

