

PAMBER PRIORY

A recital, using the 1783 chamber organ, given on Friday 7 September 1990, by
Andrew Benson-Wilson and Fiona Murphy

MARCELLO	(1686-1739)	Sonata in G for Cello and continuo (Opus 2, No 6)
FRESCOBALDI	(1583-1643)	Capriccio sopra il Cucho
VIVALDI	(1678-1741)	Sonata in Bb minor for Cello and continuo (No 6)
FRESCOBALDI		Bergomasca
MARCELLO		Sonata in F for Cello and continuo (Opus 2, No 1)
∞ ∞ ∞		
FRESCOBALDI		Toccata Quarta per l'Organo da sonarsi alla levatione
BACH (after Marcello)	(1685-1750)	Concerto in D minor (BWV 974)
DeFESCH	(1687-1757)	Sonata in d minor for Cello and continuo (Opus 8, No 3)

MARCELLO Sonata in G for Cello and Continuo

Adagio - Allegro - Grave - Allegro

Marcello was the son of a Venetian Senator who tried in vain to move him from a musical to a legal career. In addition to his many musical activities, Marcello became one of the Grand Counsellors of the Republic and, following a series of posts in Venetian public administration, became Chamberlain of Brescia. Along with Vivaldi, he was one of the first composers to write for the cello as a solo instrument, extending its earlier role as a purely continuo or supporting bass instrument. This sonata is the last of a set of six published in London in 1732 with the title of *Six Solos for a Violoncello with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord*. It follows the typical Italian slow-fast-slow-fast sonata format. In the tradition of the time, the continuo bass is realised, and partly improvised, by the accompanist.

FRESCOBALDI Capriccio sopra il Cucho

Frescobaldi was one of the most famous keyboard players and composers of the late Renaissance and early Baroque period. He became the organist of St Peter's in Rome at the age of 25. He published his book of Capricci in 1624 and they are considered to be amongst the highlights of his keyboard works. They combine the styles of the three typical forms of the *ricercare*, *canzona* and *toccata*, to produce a combination including rhythmic vitality, contrapuntal seriousness and freedom of expression. A *capriccio* involves a working out of a particular theme or musical motif. In this instance the piece seems to be starting off in a typical rather severe Renaissance *ricercare* style, until you become aware of the sound of a cuckoo as a treble *ostinato*. This two note motif, although seemingly unrelated to the music going on underneath it, is repeated no less than 80 times during the course of the piece and in a dazzling variety of contexts. The Grove Dictionary of Music speaks very highly of this piece, saying that '*not even the Sonata Sopra Sancta Maria in Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 reaches such heights of ingenuity and virtuosity.*'

VIVALDI Sonata in Bb minor for Cello and Continuo

Largo - Allegro - Largo - Allegro

Vivaldi, the son of a violinist at St Mark's, Venice, spent much of his career as a teacher and director of music to the girls of the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice. Much of his music was written for the girls to perform in the very popular public concerts. He wrote some 90 solo sonatas, many of which are for violin. This Sonata is the last of a set of six Cello Sonatas published in Paris in 1740. His love of syncopated melody is particularly evident in the Allegro movements. The two Largo movements are particularly fine, the first with a broad and lyrical melody over a pulsating accompaniment and the second more intense and highly

chromatic. The final Allegro includes some virtuosic writing for the cello.

FRESCOBALDI Bergomasca

This piece take the form of a series of seven sections in the form of variations on a popular song of the time. The tune appears in a variety of guises, and some of the variations are in a contrasting triple time. The piece was published in 1635 at the end of a Frescobaldi's most famous collection of keyboard pieces - a collection with the delightful title of *Fiore Musicale* (A Musical bunch of Flowers) which, despite its title, actually contained music for the church service, with three substantial settings of the type of organ pieces that were expected to be played during the Mass. Bach is known to have studied the music of Frescobaldi and he copied out the whole of the *Fiore Musicale*. The *Bergomasca* appears at the end of the last of these Mass settings, and it is unclear whether Frescobaldi intended it to be played as a concluding piece to the Mass - if so, it would have certainly sent the congregation dancing down the aisles.

MARCELLO Sonata in F for Cello and Continuo

Adagio - Allegro - Grave - Allegro

Marcello's Sonata in F allows more of a dialogue between the cello and accompaniment - there are a number of passages where the cello take a less dominant role and the melodic interest has to be taken up by the continuo player. The first movement however belongs to the cellist, with a lovely melody, the first phrase of which spans an octave (echoed by similar phrases at the beginning of the second and fourth movements). The two Allegro movements are typical of Marcellos' jolly and tuneful style - he must have been a happy man!

∞ ∞ Short Interval ∞ ∞

FRESCOBALDI Toccata Quarta .. alla levatione

The lively nature of Frescobaldi's secular pieces perhaps explain the apocryphal story that 30,000 people turned up to his first organ recital at St Peter's. The organ had a very important role in the services at that time, playing a number of versets during the *Kryies* and other parts of the liturgy and also undertaking the time-honoured role of filling-in while some part of the ritual was going in the sanctuary. The most mysterious and holy of these rituals was the Elevation of the Host. Frescobaldi left a number of pieces to be played during this part of the Mass and they are wonderfully still, meditative and reflective pieces, often demonstrating daring and evocative harmonies. Towards the end of this piece, from his second book of toccatas, can be heard the distinctive Lombardic rhythm (or Scotch snap) so typical of Italian music of the time.

BACH (after Marcello) Concerto in C (BWV 974)
(Allegro) – Adagio – Presto

Bach's keyboard concertos were written in 1713/14 whilst he was employed at the court of the Dukes of Weimar. At the time, the Italian instrumental concerto style was becoming very popular throughout Europe, and many examples of concertos by Vivaldi and other Italian composers were published, particularly in Amsterdam. The young Prince Johann Ernst was also an accomplished musician and composer, and was keen to hear these compositions in his own home. Bach recomposed and arranged a number of them for organ and harpsichord. This example is from the set generally assumed to be intended for the harpsichord, although there is no reason to suppose that they, along with a number of the 'harpsichord' Toccatas, should not be also played on the organ. Bach based his concerto on an oboe concerto by Marcello. The long melodic lines of the lyrical Adagio are particularly fine, as is the lively triple time Presto.

DeFESCH Sonata for Cello and Continuo
Siciliano – Allemande – Arietta – Minuets I-II-I

Willem DeFesch was born in Alkmaar in the Netherlands. In 1725 he became Kapelmeester at Antwerp Cathedral, but had to resign in 1731 because of quarrels with the Cathedral Chapter - who described him as temperamental, mean and of slovenly character! Shortly afterwards he moved to London where he made a successful career as a composer and violin virtuoso. His Opus 8 sonatas are recognized as his masterpiece. They are in the Italian style, although in the case of this third sonata, follow the form of a suite of dances rather than the more usual slow-fast-slow-fast style of Vivaldi or Marcello. The lyrical and bacchic siciliano leads to the rhythmic and lively Allemande. The Arietta, marked Larghetto e Piano, forms a gentle prelude to the two lively Minuets, the first of which is repeated after the end of the second.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

The organ at Pamber Priory dates from 1783 and is an important and rather rare example of a chamber organ by Richard Seede of Bristol. It was almost certainly intended for domestic music making rather than for use in a church. Its early history is unknown, although it is thought that it could have built for a house in Winchester.

It was restored by Martin Renshaw, who is well known for his scholarly reconstruction and restoration of historic organs. The Dulciana pipework is new, but practically all the other pipes are original, as are the keyboards (of ivory and stained pear and ebony), the key action, most stop knobs and the stop action and much of the mahogany casework. The winding system is new, but is similar to the likely original form. The wind for the bellows can be raised either by an electric motor or, in the original manner, by the organist pumping a foot pedal or an assistant using a lever that can be attached to the side of the organ.

The organ is tuned to a modified meantone temperament rather than the equal temperament used, for example, in

modern pianos. This temperament was typical of musical instruments until the eighteenth century and makes the organ particularly suitable for the performance of early music. It gives a very pure and attractive sound for the most frequently used keys. However, as a consequence, the keys that would not normally be used can sound quite badly out of tune!

The organ has six stops, and the stop knobs are arranged on either side of the keyboard as shown below -

<i>Fifteenth</i> 2' ○	○ <i>Twelfth</i> 2 ² / ₃ '
<i>Flute</i> 4' ○	○ <i>Principal</i> 4'
<i>Dulciana</i> 8' ○	○ <i>Stopped Diapason</i> 8'

A foot pedal stops the Principal, Twelfth and Fifteenth stops sounding. This device, common in eighteenth century chamber organs, can be used to give the effect of a two manual organ. The lowest note of the organ is bottom G - as opposed to the bottom C in modern organs. This longer bass compass is typical of English organs up to Victorian times. A detailed report on the reconstruction of the organ appeared in the Journal of the British Institute of Organ Studies in 1987.

A bit of detective work went into discovering the date of the organ. For some reason the last two numbers of the date 17.. on the nameboard have been erased at some stage. The nameboard has been examined by a forensic scientist using advanced spectrographic equipment who discovered that the date is in fact 1783.

Notes © AJBW

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

ANDREW BENSON-WILSON specializes in the performance of organ music from the earliest period up to the late eighteenth century. He has studied with some of the leading authorities on early keyboard music, including Jaques van Ortmerssen and Harald Vogel. His playing is based on an appreciation and understanding of historic instruments and contemporary techniques of performance, registration and interpretation. He is an active member of the British Institute of Organ Studies, is on the executive committee of the Organ Club and has written a highly acclaimed series of articles on the techniques and performance of early organ music.

FIONA MURPHY is a well known local musician. She studied with Eileen Croxford at the Royal College of Music and also with Jacqueline du Pré and Christopher Bunting. She has performed extensively as soloist and chamber musician and has performed many of the major cello concertos. She recently gave the first performance of the concerto by the local composer, Stephen Scotchmer, which was written for her. She is a member of the London Chamber Soloists (and has performed with them at the South Bank) and also the Terroni Piano Trio, with whom she will shortly be touring the Soviet Union.