

An aerial, high-angle view of a highly detailed miniature city model. The city is built on a hillside and features a variety of architectural styles, including domes, arches, and classical columns. A prominent turquoise river winds through the center of the city, with several bridges crossing it. The buildings are painted in shades of green, yellow, and brown, and are interspersed with small trees and greenery. The overall scene is vibrant and detailed, suggesting a rich cultural or historical setting.

B

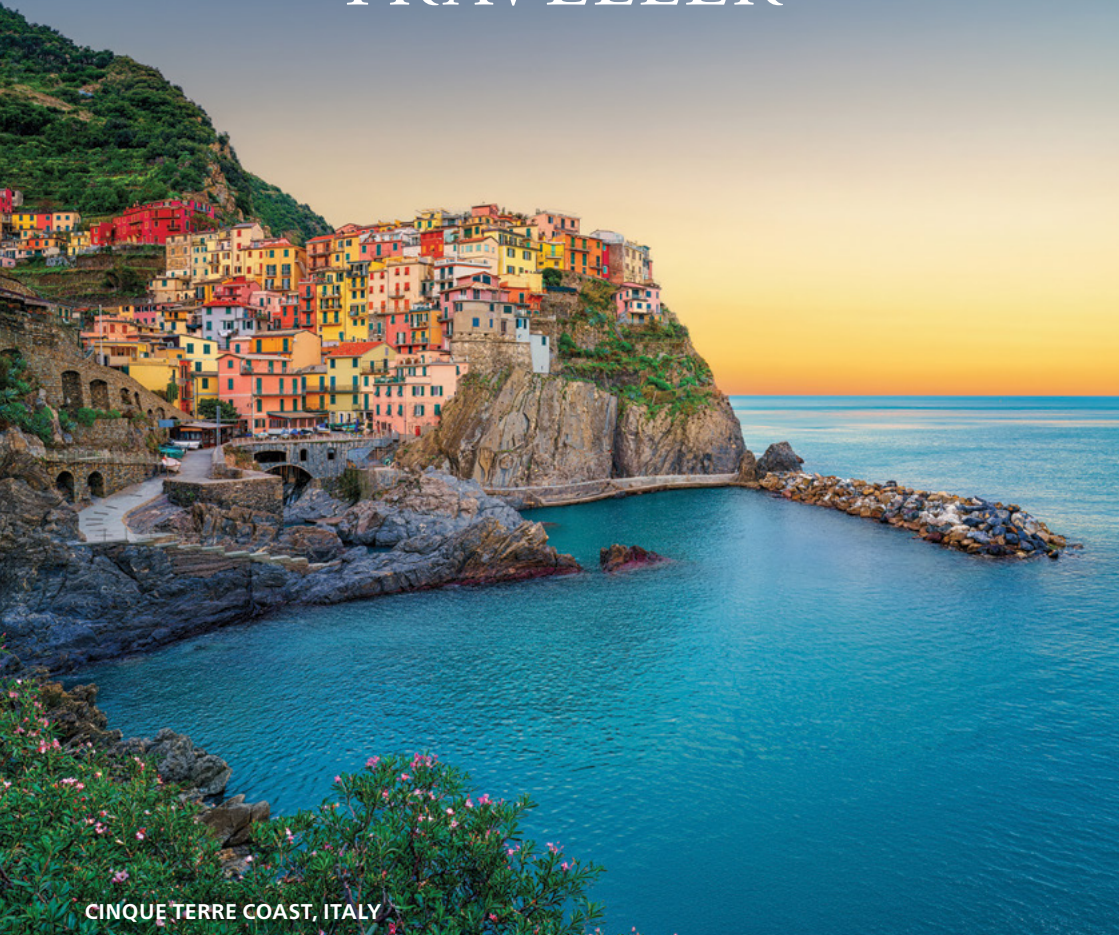
AUSTRALIAN  
BRANDENBURG  
ORCHESTRA

# Italian Serenatas

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SERIES 03 JUNE

# Italian Serenatas

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With Thanks

## PERFORMANCE DATES

MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE	CITY RECITAL HALL, SYDNEY	QUEENSLAND PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
Thu, 18 Jun, 2026 7PM	Wed, 24 Jun, 2026 7PM	Thu, 02 Jul, 2026 7.30PM
Sat, 20 Jun, 2026 5PM	Fri, 26 Jun, 2026 7PM	
Sun, 21 Jun, 2026 5PM	Sat, 27 Jun, 2026 2PM	
	Sat, 27 Jun, 2026 7PM	
	Tue, 30 Jun, 2026 7PM	

## ARTISTS

Renato Dolcini (Italy) Baritone

Paul Dyer (Sydney) Harpsichord, Conductor

Australian Brandenburg Orchestra

The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is privileged to live, create and perform on the lands of the longest living culture in the world, and we pay deep respect to traditional custodians and Elders, past and present.

# Repertoire

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## First Half

### Firenze (Florence)

Gregori	Concerto Grosso in C major, Op. 2 No. 1 i <i>Adagio, e staccato - Presto</i> ii <i>Adagio</i> iii <i>Allegro</i>
Philips	<i>Aria del Gran Duca</i>
Cozzolino after F Caccini	<i>Ciaccona</i>
Ferrari	<i>Amanti, io vi sò dire</i>
Gregori	Concerto Grosso in D major, Op. 2 No. 2 i <i>Grave—Allegro</i> ii <i>Largo</i> iii <i>Allegro</i>

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### Napoli (Naples)

Falconieri	'Ciaccona' from <i>Il primo libro di canzone</i>
Porpora	'Ombre oscure' from serenata <i>Deianira, Iole ed Ercole</i>
Matteis	<i>Diverse bizzarrie Sopra la Vecchia Sarabanda ò pur Ciaccona</i>
Porpora	Se lusinga il labbro e 'l ciglio' from cantata <i>Oh se fosse il mio core in libertà, S 74</i>
Anonymous	<i>Pizzica di San Vito</i>

# Repertoire

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## Second Half

### Roma (Rome)

Corelli	<i>Adagio—Allegro</i> from Concerto Grosso in D major, Op. 6 No. 4
Anonymous	<i>Homo fugit velut umbra - Passacaglia della vita</i>
Corelli	'Ciaccona' from Trio Sonata in G major, Op. 2 No. 12
Handel	'Vieni, o cara' (Claudio) from opera <i>Agrippina</i> , Act I Scene 21, HWV 6
Caldara	'Sparga il senso lascivo veleno' from sacred oratorio <i>La Castità al Cimento</i>

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### Venezia (Venice)

attrib. Vivaldi	<i>Affetuoso &amp; Presto</i> from Sinfonia in C major, RV 116/Anh. 144
Vivaldi	'Gelido in ogni vena' (Farnace) from opera <i>Farnace</i> , Act 2 Scene 6, RV 711
Vivaldi	'Per lacerarlo' (Zidiana) from opera <i>Teuzzone</i> , Act 3 Scene 9, RV 736

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#### KEYBOARD TUNERS

Harpsichord preparation in Sydney by Nathan Cox

Harpsichord preparation in Melbourne by Shaun Catchpole

Harpsichord preparation in Brisbane by Jason Boyd

#### PERFORMANCE LENGTH

Performance will be approximately 110 minutes with Interval

# Australian Brandenburg Orchestra



Photo by Keith Saunders

The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is the national Baroque music flagship. It is a world leader in historically informed performance and hugely influential in the broader musical landscape.

The rise and triumph of the Brandenburg through the unflagging passion and vision of its co-founders Paul Dyer and Bruce Applebaum is one of the most extraordinary success stories in the nation's performing arts history.

Since its stunning debut at the Sydney Opera House in 1990, the orchestra has introduced Baroque (and earlier) music at a serious level, playing on instruments authentic to the period. The Brandenburg is renowned for its energetic spirit, stylistic diversity, ambition and innovation. In the words of the Honorable Dame Quentin Bryce, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra 'has brought untold rewards in its brilliant musicianship, imaginative programming, outstanding soloists and partnerships. It has created adventures steeped in tradition yet luminously alive and liberating.'

A unique company, the Brandenburg vibrantly reawakens Baroque and Classical masterpieces for a contemporary audience. The Brandenburg's 20 recordings with ABC Classics include five ARIA Award winners for Best Classical Album.

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'...what stands out at concert after concert is the impression that this bunch of musicians is having a really good time. They look at each other and smile and laugh... there's a warmth and sense of fun not often associated with classical performance.'

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD



# Renato Dolcini

Baritone



Renato is an Italian baritone and bass vocalist from Milan. Since his international debut following his 2015 win in the prestigious “Le Jardin des Voix” singing competition, Renato Dolcini has been imposing himself on the international Baroque music scene. Trained initially by Vincenzo Manno (Accademia Teatro alla Scala) and Gianluca Valenti, and then by Cecilia Bartoli (Gstaad Vocal Academy), the Milanese baritone is appreciated in equal measure for his dramatic talent and his vocal virtuosity.

Renato has worked with many pre-eminent Baroque conductors around the world including William Christie, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Giovanni Antonini, Stefano Montanari, Fabio Biondi, Christophe Rousset, Gianluca Capuano, Riccardo Minasi, as well as influential stage directors including Sir Graham Vick, Moshe Leisers and Patrice Caurier, Robert Carsen, Pierre Audi, and David Alden. Recently, he sang at the Staatsoper Hamburg (Pallante in Handel’s Agrippina, staged by Barrie Kosky) and made his debut at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow (The King of Scotland in Handel’s Ariodante).

He has also headlined concerts at La Philharmonie de Paris, Bozar (Brussels), Barbican Hall (London), Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, KKL (Lucerne), Lincoln Center (New York), Suntory Hall (Tokyo), Berliner Philharmonie, and The Royal Concertgebouw (Amsterdam).

Among Renato’s other engagements, in 2019, the BBC chose to highlight Mr Dolcini for the radio program Arts Hour on tour in Milan, for which he sang excerpts by Porpora and Mozart. Renato will also soon feature in a Monteverdi performance with Christina Pluhar and L’Arpeggiata in Budapest and Geneva.



# Paul Dyer AO Artistic Director

Paul Dyer AO is one of Australia's foremost specialists in historically informed performance.

He co-founded the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra in 1989 after completing postgraduate studies at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague, and has served as its Artistic Director and Conductor ever since. A visionary performer and musical thinker, Paul is known for his adventurous spirit and for collaborating across genres with circus performers, contemporary dancers, and visual artists. His performances have taken him across Europe, Asia, the USA, and Canada, and his innovative approach to stagecraft continues to shape the Brandenburg's distinctive artistic identity.

A passionate champion of Australian music, Paul has been instrumental in commissioning new works by Australian composers, often weaving early music traditions with contemporary sound worlds. His artistic leadership has also fostered meaningful collaborations with First Nations musicians, including Rrawun Maymuru and Marcus Corowa. These landmark projects blend ancient songlines with Baroque textures, offering audiences a profound and uniquely Australian musical experience.

Paul is a dedicated educator, having held teaching roles at leading institutions including the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He is also the driving force behind the Brandenburg Mentorship Program, which supports and develops the next generation of early music performers.

Over the course of his career, Paul has performed with many of the world's most celebrated soloists, including Andreas Scholl, Cyndia Sieden, Marc Destrubé, Hidemi Suzuki, Stefano Montanari, Xavier de Maistre, Shunske Sato, Maurice Steger, Riccardo Minasi, Yvonne Kenny, Emma Kirkby, Philippe Jaroussky, Samuel Mariño, Francesco Corti, Simone Kermes, and Yukie Sato.

Career highlights include the Brandenburg's European tour with Andreas Scholl in 2001, his Tokyo debut in 1998, and numerous national and international accolades for his recordings with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Brandenburg Choir, which include five ARIA Awards for Best Classical Album. More recently, Paul featured on the soundtrack of the James Bond film *Spectre* and, in 2024, appeared in the acclaimed documentary film *Mozart's Sister*.

Beyond the podium, Paul is an avid cook, traveller, and lifelong connector of people and cultures. Through the Brandenburg's programming, he continues to foster dynamic collaborations between Australian and international artists.

Paul was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2013 for his distinguished service to the performing arts. He is also a recipient of a Churchill Fellowship (1995), the Centenary Medal (2003), and the University of Sydney Alumni Medal for Professional Achievement (2010).



Paul Dyer at Melbourne Recital Centre  
Photo by Laura Manariti

# Australian Brandenburg Orchestra



Shaun Lee-Chen\* (Perth)  
Concertmaster, Baroque Violin



Matthew Bruce\* (Sydney)  
Associate Concertmaster,  
Baroque Violin



Ben Dollman\* (Adelaide)  
Principal Second Baroque Violin



Matthew Greco\* (Sydney)  
Assistant Principal Baroque Violin



Jared Adams (Sydney)  
Baroque Violin



Ella Bennetts (Sydney)  
Baroque Violin



Rafael Font (Sydney)  
Baroque Violin



Sarah Papadopoulos (Sydney)  
Baroque Violin



Timothy Willis (Melbourne)  
Baroque Violin



Monique O'Dea\* (Sydney)  
Principal Baroque Viola



Marianne Yeomans (Sydney)  
Baroque Viola



John Ma (Canberra)  
Baroque Viola



Jamie Hey\* (Melbourne)  
Principal Baroque Cello



Anton Baba (Sydney)  
Baroque Cello



Edwina Cordingley (Melbourne)  
Baroque Cello



Robert Nairn\* (Adelaide)  
Principal Baroque Violone



Brian Nixon (Sydney)  
Principal Percussion



Nicholas Pollock\* (Melbourne)  
Principal Theorbo / Baroque Guitar



George Wills (Sydney)  
Theorbo / Baroque Guitar



Hannah Lane (Melbourne)  
Principal Baroque Harp



Paul Dyer\* (Sydney)  
Harpsichord / Conductor

\*Denotes Brandenburg Permanent Musician  
# Member of the Brandenburg Mentorship Program

Brandenburg Mentorship Program supported by Patricia H Reid Endowment

<sup>†</sup>Robert Nairn appears courtesy of Elder Conservatorium, Adelaide University (Staff)

# Italian Serenatas

FIRENZE  
(Florence)

Giovanni Lorenzo Gregori (1663-1745)  
**Concerto Grosso in C major, Op. 2 No. 1**  
i *Adagio e staccato—Presto*  
ii *Adagio*  
iii *Allegro*

A composer, music theorist and violinist, Gregori came from the city of Lucca, was also the birthplace of Boccherini and Puccini. His Opus 2 *concerti*, was published in 1698, were early examples of the *concerto grosso* form, which used a small group of soloists, typically two violins and a cello, contrasted against the full orchestra. Here a short chordal introduction leads to a brisk energetic *Presto*. The slow rhythmic middle movement leads directly into the final *Allegro* which reveals a distinction between solo and tutti groups, characteristic of the *concerto grosso* form.

Peter Philips (c.1560-1628)  
***Aria del Gran Duca***

Philips was an English keyboard virtuoso and composer. He fled England in 1582 to avoid persecution as a Catholic and spent most of his working life in the Spanish Netherlands.

*Aria del Gran Duca* was one of many chord patterns on which 17<sup>th</sup> century musicians based variations. It was composed by the Italian composer Cavalieri for the wedding of his employer Francesco de Medici in Florence in 1589. About 100 pieces based on the *Gran Duca* have been identified.

Luigi Cozzolino  
after Francesca Caccini (1587-1641)  
***Ciaccona***

Luigi Cozzolino is a contemporary Italian violinist and composer. This *Ciaccona* is in the style of Francesca Caccini, the daughter of song composer Giulio Caccini. She was the highest paid musician employed by the noble Medici family in Florence, for whom she worked for over twenty years, and is thought to have been the first woman to compose an opera.

The *ciaccona* was a dance and chord pattern highly popular in Italy and Spain in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This version is for solo violin, continuo and percussion.

Benedetto Ferrari (c.1603-1681)  
***Amanti, io vi sò dire***

Ferrari was a librettist, composer, instrumentalist, and impresario. He is now best known for establishing the tradition of public opera performances in Venice which began in 1637.

*Amanti, io vi sò dire* also dates from 1637 and offers wry, tongue-in-cheek advice about romantic love. It is a set of increasingly elaborate variations built on a *ciaccona* bass pattern. The voice is accompanied by theorbo, the long-necked lute on which Ferrari was a virtuoso.

*Amanti, io vi sò dire  
Ch'è meglio assai fuggire  
Bella donna vezzosa  
Ò sia cruda o pietosa;  
Ad ogni modo e via  
Il morir per amor è una pazzia.*

*Non accade pensare  
Di gioir in amare:  
Amoroso contento  
Dedicato è al momento,  
E bella donna, al fine,  
Rosa non dona mai senza le spine.*

*La speme del gioire  
Fondata è su 'l martire;  
Bellezza e cortesia  
Non stann' in compagnia;  
So ben dir con mio danno  
Che la morte ed amor insieme vanno.*

*Vi vuol pianti a diluvi  
Per spegner i vesuvi  
D'un cor innamorato,  
D'un spirito infiammato;  
Pria che si giunga in porto  
Quante volte si dice:  
Ohimè son morto.*

*Credetel a costui  
Che per prova può dir: lo vidi, io fui;  
Se creder nol volete,  
Lasciate star che poco importa a me:  
Seguitate ad amar; ad ogni modo,  
Chi de' rompersi il collo non accade  
Che schivi od erta o fondo,  
Che per proverbio senti sempre dire;  
Dal destinato non si può fuggire.*

*Donna, so chi tu sei;  
Amor, so i fatti miei.  
Io non tresco più con voi;  
Alla laga ambidoi  
S'ogn'un fosse com'io  
saria un balordo Amor e non un dio.*

Lovers, I can tell you  
That it's much better to flee  
A beautiful, charming woman,  
Whether she's cruel or merciful;  
After all, in every case  
dying for love is madness.

Don't think  
To find joy in love,  
Amorous contentment  
Is dedicated to the moment,  
And a beautiful woman, in the end,  
Never gives roses without thorns.

The hope of joy  
Is based on suffering;  
Beauty and courtesy  
Don't make good company,  
I know to my detriment  
That death and love go together.

It takes floods of tears  
To extinguish the volcanic flames  
Of a heart in love,  
Of a soul on fire;  
Before reaching safety  
How many times have you said:  
'Alas! I'm dead!'

Believe those who can say  
From experience 'I saw, I was there.'  
If you don't want to believe,  
Never mind, it doesn't matter to me,  
Go on loving; in every way,  
You won't break your neck  
If you avoid steep slopes or drops,  
As a proverb I always heard says —  
You can't escape from destiny.

Woman, I know who you are.  
Cupid, I know what I did.  
I won't dance any more with you;  
Stay well away,  
If everyone was like me  
Cupid would be a fool, and not a god.

**Giovanni Lorenzo Gregori (1663-1745)**  
**Concerto Grosso in D major, Op. 2 No. 2**  
i *Grave*—*Allegro*  
ii *Largo*  
iii *Allegro*

This concerto opens with an extended slow harpsichord introductory movement leading to a lively elegant rhythmic *Allegro*. A delicate *Largo* provides a link to a short brisk final movement.

### NAPOLI (Naples)

**Andrea Falconieri (1585-1656)**  
**'Ciaccona' from *Il primo libro di canzone***

Falconieri was renowned as a lutenist and theorbo player throughout Italy, Spain, and France in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He was employed at a number of ducal courts in northern Italian cities, and for a time taught at a convent in Genoa until he was denounced by the mother superior for distracting the nuns with his music. He was appointed lutenist at the royal chapel in Naples in 1639 and then *maestro di cappella* (music director) in 1647.

**Nicola Antonio Porpora (1686-1768)**  
**'Ombre oscure' from serenata**  
***Deianira, Iole ed Ercole***

Born in Naples, Porpora was famous throughout Europe as an opera composer, music director and teacher of the most renowned singers of his time, including the superstar castrati Farinelli and Caffarelli. In the early 1730s he was music director of the Opera of the Nobility which rivalled Handel's company in London, where he mustered one of the finest companies of singers ever heard. He taught for some years in Vienna, where Haydn worked as his accompanist and valet.

A *serenata* was a short unstaged dramatic work, performed outdoors for an invited noble audience and often for a special occasion such as a wedding. This *serenata* comes from 1711, early in Porpora's career. It tells the story of the death of the god Hercules according to the Roman poet Ovid. Hercules has been tricked into wearing a poisoned shirt, which is so painful that he burns himself to death to escape it.

*Ombre oscure e tenebrosi antri ciechi  
E più profondi, deh! accogliete la mia salma.*

*E di oggetti spaventosi dall'orrore mi si  
circondi  
Il pensiero, e ancora l'anima, dall' orror mi si  
circondi.*

—  
Dark shadows and gloomy sightless caves  
Ever deeper, oh! receive, receive my corpse.

And with fearful objects let me be  
surrounded,  
Surround my thoughts and even my soul  
with horror.

**Nicola Matteis (fl. c.1670-after 1713)**  
***Diverse bizzarrie Sopra la Vecchia***  
***Sarabanda ò pur Ciaccona***

Nicola Matteis was one of many Italian musicians to move to England in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. He was a virtuoso violinist and influential in the development of violin playing in England. He was particularly praised for his ability to compose variations on the *ciaccona* and the *sarabande*, a well-known dance and chord pattern.

**Nicola Antonio Porpora (1686–1768)**  
**'Se lusinga il labbro e 'l ciglio' from cantata**  
**Oh se fosse il mio core in libertà, S 74**

This cantata is one of twelve for solo voice and continuo that Porpora dedicated to Frederick, Prince of Wales in 1735. A *cantata* was a small-scale vocal work with a number of movements. The storyline was usually secular (JS Bach's cantatas are referred to as 'sacred' for this reason).

As an eminent singing teacher no-one knew better than Porpora what the voice was capable of, and the long lyrical lines of this beautiful aria shows the high demands he placed on the singer's vocal flexibility and particularly his breath control.

*Se lusinga il labbro e 'l ciglio,  
 A dispetto del mio core,  
 Si fan rei di crudeltà.*

*Né sottrar posso al periglio,  
 Per voler d'antico amore,  
 Chi mi chiede almen pietà.*

—  
 If my lips and my eyes flatter,  
 In spite of my heart,  
 They are guilty of cruelty.

Nor can I remove from danger,  
 Through the wish of a former lover,  
 One who asks me at least for pity.

**Anonymous**  
**Pizzica di San Vito**

The *pizzica* was a form of the *tarantella*, a traditional dance from the Puglia region of southern Italy. According to a popular legend, dancing the *tarantella* was an antidote for a tarantula spider's bite.

*Non c'era da vini e so'vinuto.  
 So' li sospiri tua m'hannu chiamatu,  
 Ahi, core de zuccaru e limone,  
 T'agghia dà nu vasu a mocca  
 m'agghia zuccherà la vocca.*

*E si chiu bella tu de na cirasa  
 iata a l'amore tua quannu te vasa.  
 Ah, uellì uellì uellà,  
 tu bedda di stu cori  
 tu di me non ti scordà.*

*Di li capelli tua so 'nnamurato  
 li veco di vulà d'intra lu viento.*

*E vuila cu te lu dau lu core miu  
 no me nde curu ca io senza vau.  
 Beddhu lamore e ci lu sape fa.*

—  
 I shouldn't have come, but I am here.  
 Your sighs called me.  
 Ah, heart of sugar and lemon,  
 I must kiss you  
 to sweeten my mouth.

You are lovelier than a cherry,  
 Blessed be your love when I kiss you.  
 Ah, uellì uellì uellà,  
 Beauty, do not forget  
 the beauty of my heart.

I am in love with your hair,  
 I see it flying in the wind.

I want to give you my heart,  
 I don't care if I leave without it.  
 Love and those who know it are beautiful.

[Interval]

**ROMA**  
**(Rome)**

**Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)**  
**Concerto Grosso in D major, Op. 6 No. 4**  
 i Adagio—Allegro

Corelli was one of Rome's foremost violinists by the age of only 23 and renowned throughout Europe for his compositions. He is credited with perfecting the *concerto grosso* model, and was an important influence on future generations of composers.

The first movement in this *concerto grosso* opens with a very short slow introduction, followed by a lengthy fugal *Allegro*, in which the two solo violins continually chase the melody as they toss it between each other, with the occasional interjection by the accompanying instruments.

**Anonymous**  
**Homo fugit velut umbra - Passacaglia della vita**

This anonymous work comes from a set of mystical and moralising songs, 'as sung in the Oratory of Chiavenna', published in 1657. Chiavenna is a small town in the north of Italy, close to the Swiss border. The Latin title references the Old Testament Book of Job which like this song is a meditation on life and death. A *passacaglia* was a well-known dance form but here the title is used as a metaphor for the 'dance' of life which ends in death.

*O come t'inganni  
 se pensi che gl'anni  
 non hann'da finire,  
 bisogna morire.*

*E'un sogno la vita  
 che par si gradita,  
 è breve il gioire,  
 bisogna morire.  
 Non val medicina,  
 non giova la China,  
 non si può guarire,  
 bisogna morire.*

*Non vaglion sberate,  
 minarie, bravate  
 che caglia l'ardire,  
 bisogna morire.  
 Dottrina che giova,  
 parola non trova  
 Che plachi l'ardire,  
 bisogna morire.*

*Non si trova modo  
 di scogliè 'sto nodo,  
 non val il fuggire,  
 bisogna morire.  
 Commun'è il statuto,  
 non vale l'astuto  
 'sto colpo schermire,  
 bisogna morire.*

*La morte crudele  
 a tutti è infedele,  
 ogn'uno svergogna,  
 morire bisogna.  
 È pur ò pazzia  
 o gran frenesia,  
 par dirsi menzogna,  
 morire bisogna*

*Si more cantando,  
 si more sonando  
 la Cetra, o Sampogna,  
 morire bisogna.  
 Si more danzando,  
 bevendo, mangiando;  
 con quella carogna  
 morire bisogna.*



Italian Baroque with Circa. Photo by Keith Saunders

*I Giovani, i Putti  
e gl'Uomini tutti  
s'hann'a incenerire,  
bisogna morire.  
I sani, gl'infermi,  
i bravi, gl'inermi,  
tutt'hann'a finire  
bisogna morire.*

*E quando che meno  
ti pensi, nel seno  
ti vien a finire,  
bisogna morire.  
Se tu non vi pensi  
hai persi li sensi,  
sei morto e puoi dire:  
bisogna morire.*

—  
Oh how you fool yourself  
if you think that the years  
will never end.  
We must die.

Life is a dream,  
that seems so sweet,  
but joy is brief.  
We must die.  
Medicine won't help,  
quinine is no use,  
you can't be cured.  
We must die.

Worthless are lamentations,  
threats, bravado  
produced by our courage.  
We must die.  
No learned doctrine  
can find the words  
to calm this boldness.  
We must die.

You won't find a way  
to untie this knot,  
it is not worth fleeing,  
We must die.

It is the same for everyone,  
a wily man cannot  
shield himself from the blow.  
We must die.

You die singing,  
You die playing  
the harp, the bagpipe,  
die we must.  
You die dancing,  
drinking, eating,  
with this carrion,  
die we must.

Cruel Death  
is unfaithful to all,  
and shames everyone.  
Die we must.  
And although madness  
Or great excitement,  
seem like lying to oneself.  
Die we must.

Youths, children,  
and all men  
will become ash,  
We must die.  
The healthy, the sick,  
the great, the defenceless,  
will all come to an end.  
We must die.

And when you least  
think of it, in your heart  
you come to an end,  
We must die.  
If you do not think of this,  
you have lost your senses,  
you are dead and you can say:  
We must die.

**Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)**  
**'Ciaccona' from Trio Sonata in G major,  
Op. 2 No. 12**

The *ciaccona* originated in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century as a dance-song popular in the Spanish dominions in the New World. It was condemned for its suggestive movements and satirical texts, but its driving rhythm and short, powerful pattern of only four basic harmonies made it an ideal ground bass on which to create variations. Corelli's *Ciaccona*, an elegant and stylish dialogue between two violins supported by continuo, takes it a long way from its folk-song beginnings.

**George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)**  
**'Vieni, o cara' (Claudio) from opera  
Agrippina, Act I Scene 21, HWV 6**

Handel spent three years in Italy as a young man, and composed *Agrippina* for Venice in 1709. It is set in ancient Rome but the plot is fictional. Handel's first masterpiece, it displays his ability to musically create character and express real emotion. In this gentle short aria Emperor Claudius expressed his amorous intentions – but not towards his wife Agrippina!

*Vieni, o cara, che in lacci stretto  
Dolce diletto Amor prepara.*

—  
Come, darling, tightly held,  
Love prepares sweet delight.

**Antonio Caldara (1670-1736)**  
**'Sparga il senso lascivo veleno' from oratorio  
La Castità al Cimento**

Caldara was born in Venice and worked there as a violinist and composer until 1700, when he left to work first for the Duke of Mantua and later for Prince Ruspoli, a lavish patron of the arts, in Rome.

From 1717 until his death, he was vice music director to the Habsburg court in Vienna. Caldara was enormously prolific—he composed over 60 operas and 40 oratorios—and was renowned throughout Europe in his own time, but after his death his works were rarely heard. Interest has revived in Caldara and one of the leading experts responsible for this is Sydney-based musicologist and Brandenburg friend, Dr Alan Maddox.

Caldara composed *La Castità al Cimento* (chastity put to the test) for Rome in 1705. An *oratorio* was similar to a short opera, without scenery or stage action. The plot carried a religious message; here chastity triumphs over worldly love, the character's religious fervour expressed in a virtuosic vocal line.

*Sparga il senso lascivo veleno  
Pudico il mio seno già mai cederà.*

*Pien di zelo ed affetto il mio core al suo  
Redentore costante vivrà.*

—  
Let the senses spread their lascivious poison  
— my modest heart will never yield.

My heart will constantly live full of zeal and  
affection for its redeemer.

VENEZIA  
(Venice)

attrib. Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)  
Sinfonia in C major, RV II6/Anh. 144  
ii *Affetuoso*  
iii *Presto*

A *sinfonia* often functioned as the overture to a large vocal work and was the precursor of the classical symphony. Little is known about this *sinfonia*, which is now not thought to be by Vivaldi. For this concert, the graceful slow middle movement in a minor key is followed by a bright *Presto*.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)  
'Gelido in ogni vena' (Farnace) from opera  
*Farnace*, Act 2 Scene 6, RV 711

Vivaldi was one of the most successful opera composers in Italy in the first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His opera composing career covered almost 30 years, from 1713 to 1741, and he travelled across Italy staging his own operas. He composed *Farnace* for Venice in 1726 but added this superb aria, recycled from another opera, for a revival in Pavia in 1731.

Vivaldi re-used the opening of his 'Winter' concerto to illustrate shivering, as *Farnace* despairs that he has caused the death of his child.

*Gelido in ogni vena  
Scorrei mi sento sangue;  
L'ombra del figlio esangue  
M'ingombra di terror.*

—  
I feel my freezing blood  
flow in every vein;  
The ghost of my lifeless son  
Fills me with terror.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)  
'Per lacerarlo' (Zidiana) from opera  
*Teuzzone*, Act 3 Scene 10, RV 736

Vivaldi composed *Teuzzone* in 1719 for Mantua, where he worked for two years for the Prince of Mantua. It was set in China and accurately portrays ancient Chinese rituals and legal customs. The plot deals with power struggles for the Chinese throne. This is a very Vivaldian 'fury' aria, a *bravura* piece which shows off the singer's ability to sing very fast *coloratura* passages and wide leaps depicting flashes of lightning.

*Per lacerarlo, per fulminarlo,  
già vibro il dardo del mio furor.*

*A spaventare, ad atterrare  
basta un mio sguardo quel suo rigor.*

—  
To tear him apart, to strike him with lightning,  
I make ready the arrow of my fury.

To frighten, to destroy his power —  
One glance of mine is enough.

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