

# FLORILEGIUM NEWSLETTER

President - Dame Emma Kirkby OBE

Honorary Vice Presidents - David Hill and Sir David Lumsden

## 2016-17 brings a season of change for Florilegium

### Upcoming concerts

11th November 7.30pm

#### **Telemann & the French Masters**

Mylor Theatre, Truro, TR1 3XX

27th November 3pm

#### **Haydn & Mozart**

Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury, SW1 1RD

3rd December 8.15pm

#### **Telemann & Handel**

The English Reformed Church,  
Amsterdam

4th December 3.15pm

#### **Bach, Vivaldi & Telemann**

Muziekgebouw, Eindhoven

17th December

#### **Bach B minor Mass with Paragon Singers**

Wiltshire Music Centre, BA15 1DZ



The 2016-17 season starts with a number of changes. As most of you know by now, Valeria Farruggia has joined Florilegium as our new Administrator after Jacky Guter's retirement in May. Valeria has plenty of experience within the music industry: she worked at the Royal Academy of Music as Development Coordinator and then at the Royal College of Music as Faculties Administrator and Masterclass Coordinator, where she coordinated and organised masterclasses, concerts and festivals within College and internationally. She has always had a keen interest in music and has undertaken cello conservatoire studies in Italy. Valeria continues to cultivate her love for music playing in amateur orchestras and chamber groups.

We have recently rebuilt our website ([www.florilegium.org.uk](http://www.florilegium.org.uk)) to offer a more engaging experience and enable our web visitors to navigate it better, so please do visit it and keep up to date with our concerts diary listed there.

We are also relaunching our Friends scheme with a wider range of benefits and two additional membership levels for which you can find full details on our website [www.florilegium.org.uk/supportus](http://www.florilegium.org.uk/supportus). The new membership offers more opportunities for exclusive insight into our work through behind the scenes access. Please do get in touch with Valeria on [v.farruggia@florilegium.org.uk](mailto:v.farruggia@florilegium.org.uk) or 07443 427470, if you wish to discuss these in more detail.

## Upcoming concerts continued...

27 & 28 January 7pm

### Music at the Court of Frederick the Great

Fundación Juan March, Madrid

25th March 7.30pm

### Bach B minor Mass with Waynflete Singers

Winchester Cathedral, SO23 9LS

2nd April 11am

### St Matthew Passion with Bach Choir

Royal Festival Hall, London, SE1 8XX

25th June 7.30pm

### Telemann's 250th anniversary concert

Wigmore Hall, London, W1U 2BP

## My interview for Presto Classical

Following the successful launch of the recent Telemann CD, Presto Classical caught up with me over the summer with this brief interview which is on their [website](#).

### Florilegium at 25

**1. This album marks Florilegium's 25th anniversary and it's fair to say that the ensemble has come a long way in a**

**quarter of a century - awards, critical acclaim and a firm reputation as one of the leading ensembles in the early music movement. How do you feel your approach to this music has changed since the ensemble's inception?**

I think it's fair to say that our enthusiasm for this music hasn't waned over the years but I do feel we approach this music now with more enquiry, obviously more experience and a higher expectation of what we are trying to communicate with each work, than when we first approached this music in the early years. There was novelty back then, perhaps some naivety as well, and we certainly did seem to play everything very quickly indeed, as if we were in a hurry to ingest and then present as much music as possible.

In our first few years we naturally gravitated towards the more well-known repertoire as well. I feel it was important for us to establish ourselves in mainstream repertoire, notwithstanding some enjoyable projects of French baroque music that we championed in the mid-1990s. I am thinking of instrumental as well as vocal works by composers such as Campra, Monteclair and Charpentier. There has also been a natural and healthy turn-over of personnel in the ensemble since our debut in 1991 and with each new core member comes new

ideas, new ways of examining and performing the compositions in our repertoire, which is always exciting and challenging at the same time. Florilegium has established its reputation as a chamber ensemble mainly through our belief that all colleagues contribute something unique to the ensemble. In that way each musician feels valued and we certainly encourage an open musical dialogue which I feel has been the key to our success over the years.

**2. Is there any repertoire that you'd be tempted to revisit now in light of the new developments in musicology since you first started recording?**

That is certainly an interesting question, and we have covered so much repertoire in our 25 years of concert performances



and recordings. I do firmly believe that all the recordings we have made in our varied discography plots an interesting history in the development of Florilegium. I still feel able to listen to our recordings, even those early, youthful performances with enjoyment and a sense that the music making was honest and heartfelt, despite our lack

of experience, and I'm not sure I would want to re-record many, if any of them again. They seem relevant today as they felt relevant when we recorded them. Of course a major part of any ensemble's development has to be research into repertoire (especially in our field of period performance), but as well as discovering new repertoire (Bolivian Baroque Music), we also regularly return to some old favourites, the Brandenburgs and Orchestral Suites by Bach for example, works that have been in our repertoire since our debut concert in July 1991 at Blackheath Concert Halls in London. It was the complete Brandenburgs that I chose to present at Wigmore Hall a few months ago to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, repertoire that stands the test of time and seems even more exciting to play now than it



did all those years ago when we were starting out. The nature of our concert work does lend itself to revisiting repertoire and we do find that certain programmes we perform are popular each season. We do notice a change in approach to some of this repertoire, and occasionally

this new perspective might be a result of us maturing, but that really would be too simplistic a reason. I believe that the music we play evolves over time, as we do and in the right combination, our live performances allow us to breath fresh life into some of these old favourites without looking to change the language of our interpretations too radically.

**3. Alongside the Telemann disc, you've included a second disc of highlights from the ensemble's story so far - how did you decide what to include on this and (if it's not an impossible question!) do you have a particular personal favourite piece or movement?**

With this being our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary season I wanted to include something alongside the Telemann concerti and so sought to present a sort of recital disc with this new release. Our previous compilation CDs were used almost exclusively for marketing purposes, acknowledging our 10<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, and were very much seen as "Floriss greatest hits", lots of short tracks, giving a snapshot of our discography and breadth of repertoire to tempt promoters and Festival directors. This new compilation of course

contains highlights of our recording story so far, but I limited it to 16 tracks from 16 different CDs and plotted the order very carefully so the listener could sit down and experience a cohesive recital. The opening track is actually taken from a live recording of the Christmas Oratorio we made whilst touring the programme with our expanded forces and the Florilegium choir in the Canary Islands back in 1994. I stumbled across it a year or so ago and it has never appeared on one of our CDs before, but the chorus *Herrscher des Himmels* is so infectiously joyous that I couldn't resist it. Of the 16 tracks five are by JSBach and three by Telemann (that's half the tracks I hear your readers complain), and the remaining tracks are by Couperin, Pergolesi, Vivaldi, Leclair, Haydn, CPEBach, Monteclair and Chavarria. As to a personal favourite, well that's easy. We recorded our CD of music from Telemann's Tafelmusik back in 2002 and my favourite track on this new compilation has to be the Conclusion from the Overture and Conclusion in E minor from Part 1. My wife was expecting our second child at this time and managed to go into labour and safely deliver our daughter Mollie on day two, in the one session during the three days of recording that I was not needed. I dedicated this CD to Mollie for her perfect timing and it is still my favourite recording.

**4. The notes accompanying the Telemann concertos refer to the influence of the**

**composer's time in Poland, and the adoption of the various elements of Polish music in writing. In general, discussion of the "schools" in the Baroque has been in terms of the French, German and Italian styles; do you think the traditions of what we'd now consider Eastern Europe have been overlooked?**

Very much so. We naturally talk of the international styles of baroque music by composers from France, Germany and Italy in the same breath and so easily forget other nations who have left their indelible mark with their numerous outstanding compositions. We must also not forget our English composers of course and their particular style of writing, especially those 17<sup>th</sup> century masters such as Purcell, Blow and Lawes to name just a few. However, if we look briefly at the former Austrian Empire and especially the music from the Czech lands and Poland, here we have a musical culture and style that was unique to this geographical region. Rustic music in Bohemia and Moravia is what made such an impression on Telemann during his visit to Sorau in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. In his autobiography he wrote that "if you listened carefully you could pick up enough ideas from them in a week to last you a lifetime." In recent years this balance has started to be redressed thanks to a number of musicologists who have done some invaluable research in this area. I am thinking particularly of recent published papers and books

looking in more detail at the court music in Moravia and the Habsburg Empire, as well as the whole area of musical culture and style in what is now the Czech Republic. We are beginning to explore the music from Kroměříž, music by the Moravian composer Finger, and works by Biber, Muffat and Schmeltzer are no longer relegated to the unusual and niche markets, but appear in more mainstream Festivals and are being embraced by period and modern players alike. All good news.

**5. You also mention the way Telemann was, in his day, much more highly-regarded than Bach - situation that today is comprehensively reversed. Do you feel this complete reversal of Telemann's fortunes is fair - how do you think it came about?**

I'm not sure I entirely agree with you that this reversal of fortunes is so comprehensive these days. Telemann's enormous published output in the 18<sup>th</sup> century made musical scores more easily available to music lovers from all strata of society. His richness of melody, uncomplicated musical textures and a willingness to develop his musical style to conform to changing public taste certainly made him an important and popular composer at the time.

Bach's compositions were often limited to the structures of known genres and stylistic idioms he inherited, although his music was unparalleled for its inventiveness. His music always seems fresh and highly creative and there is an intellectual component to his music, a logic that fascinates musicians and non-musicians alike. Interestingly Bach's audience at his death consisted of a few sons and faithful students, but his reputation is unique in that sense, as he may be the only composer who died without a reputation but who seems to have been resurrected with such devotion one hundred years later by a generation whose musical tastes and practices he could never have anticipated. Bach is now considered one of the towering geniuses of Western music, whilst Telemann is remembered mostly because of his prolific output. Their compositions cannot



really be easily compared. Bach's reputation these days is built on his exceptional large scale works - the great Masses, Passions and larger scale cantatas as well as his great collections including the Six Brandenburg Concertos,

Four Orchestral Suites, the Musical Offering, Art of Fugue, cello suites and violin sonatas and partitas. These of course have garnered him an enviable reputation. However, Telemann's strength lies in his numerous smaller scale works including over 700 instrumental works (concertos, suites and sonatas), and over 1,700 small scale sacred cantatas. However he is now also gaining a reputation for nearly 50 operas that were composed over three decades. His inventiveness through unusual combinations of instruments, colours and his exceptional chamber works (a genre that Bach generally avoided) has given him considerable airplay these days and has encouraged us to release our new recording this month, our seventh recording of Telemann's works. From my perspective both composers have unique things to offer musicians and audiences alike. Far from being eclipsed, Telemann currently leads Bach seven to five in Florilegium's discography!

### Join us on Twitter



If you have a Twitter account, please do join the conversation by following @FlorilegiumUK, which also feeds into our website. We post lots of news there, so it's a great way of keeping up to date!

## Our next project

### Telemann's Essercizi Musicii recording

Inspired by the success of our new Telemann CD (placed 10<sup>th</sup> in the Classical Music Charts) we are embarking on an even more ambitious project in March next year with Channel Classics. Our dream is to record the complete collection of music in Telemann's Essercizi Musicii - 12 solo sonatas and 12 trio sonatas for flute, recorder, oboe, violin, cello, viola da gamba, harpsichord and theorbo. There are very few complete recordings of this remarkable collection and as a complete edition it will be on 2-3 cds. We are recording over a very intensive 4 day period in the wonderful Waalsekerk in Amsterdam.

We now need to raise sufficient funds to help realise this ambitious project for Florilegium. We have so far raised £3,000 of the £10,000 we need to ensure this recording takes place.

If you are willing to donate or would like to know more about this project, please get in touch with either myself on [ashleysolomon@florilegium.org.uk](mailto:ashleysolomon@florilegium.org.uk) or Valeria on [v.farruggia@florilegium.org.uk](mailto:v.farruggia@florilegium.org.uk)

## Why not donate a membership to the Friends of Florilegium to your loved ones this Christmas?

As Christmas is fast approaching, have you considered giving the gift of music?

Our Friends membership makes the perfect gift for Baroque music lovers, so please get in touch with us if you would like to arrange this.

The Christmas pack (£40) comes in a gift box and includes a personalised card signed by the players, the welcome letter and Florilegium's private compilation CD.