

# Friends of Florilegium

President ~ Dame Emma Kirkby OBE

Honorary Vice Presidents ~ David Hill and Sir David Lumsden

## RECORDING NEWS

Two new CDs have been issued in 2010. Bolivian Baroque volume 3 was selected as **DISC OF THE MONTH** in April 2010 by *BBC Music Magazine*, the world's largest-selling classical music magazine. The Pergolesi CD was selected, by the same journal, as **CD OF THE MONTH** in the vocal category in July. Here are some excerpts from the reviews so far received...

The sound is captivating – fresh-toned and inexhaustibly animated... The music is totally absorbing from beginning to end.

Performance \*\*\*\*\* Recording \*\*\*\*\*  
*BBC Music Magazine*, April 2010:  
**Disc of the Month**

Back to Bolivia for a collection that's more entertaining and engaging than ever. Florilegium plays some chamber instrumental work with customary finesse... There isn't a dull moment during the disc's hour-long duration, and plenty of musical subtleties and novelties to intrigue the ear.

*Gramophone*, May 2010

If you're looking for music to restore your faith in what's good in life, look no farther... the directness of their approach, and the purity of their sound, transmits a youthful freshness that never fails to captivate.

*San Francisco Classical Voice*, 23 Feb 2010

The instrumental items... played here with flute and violin sharing the upper parts, the light, melodious charm of the music is beautifully released. The Arakaendar Bolivia Choir is faultlessly neat and crisp, rhythmically very regular, but dramatically irrepressible... Enriching and uplifting.

*International Record Review*, Feb 2010

### Breathtaking Pergolesi

This new disc matches the competition in vocal quality and excels in the clarity of Florilegium's single strings. Above all, the spaciousness of its surround-sound recording is often breathtaking.

*BBC Music Magazine*, July 2010:  
**Choral & Song Choice**

## Florilegium

Director ~ Ashley Solomon

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**SUMMER 2010**

## RCM Ensemble in Association - the story continues

Although initially invited for a two-year Association, the Director of the Royal College of Music has decided he would like Florilegium to continue to work closely with the College. As before, the group will deliver five coaching sessions per term on eighteenth century repertoire to period and modern instrumentalists and singers.

Some of the highlights of the Association came when Florilegium players collaborated with the RCM Baroque Orchestra for their large-scale events. One of these notable collaborations was a concert performance of

Purcell's *Dioclesian*, performed with professional baroque dancers in period costume.

For the second consecutive year, Florilegium players were involved in the annual Bach Cantata concert, which takes place at St John's Smith Square.

Additionally, three players joined RCM forces to record music for the Victoria & Albert Museum's *Listening Gallery* project. All these projects were given by the RCM Baroque Orchestra and conducted by Ashley Solomon.



*Dioclesian*:  
the final rehearsal

## Pergolesi's anniversary celebrated

The 300th anniversary of Pergolesi's birth has been celebrated with a series of concerts by Florilegium throughout 2010. Fortunately, Dame Emma Kirkby and Robin Blaze were available for the majority of performances. The first one was given in Ourense (Galicia, Northern Spain) in March at a packed cathedral. After this concert the group of nine were driven many miles out of town to a remote, but spectacular meal in a three star Michelin restaurant!

The next was on Easter Sunday as part of the major Budapest Spring festival, where again there wasn't an empty seat to be had. In May there were two performances given within three days. The first of these (on a Friday) was in the magnificent setting of Melk Abbey, set on the banks of the River Danube, 90 minutes drive from Vienna. Home on the Saturday, with the Wigmore Hall performance (and official UK launch of the CD) on the Sunday.

Then to the pretty church which is the setting for Stour Festival (near Ashford, Kent). The summer festival performances were in Landshut (Germany) and Quimper (France).

At last, in September, Florilegium take the concert to Pergolesi's native Italy, to Merano.

A slightly different programme will be performed in October in St Polten, which is only a few miles from Melk. The year will end with a performance as part of the York Christmas Festival of Early Music, in December. A truly international spread; the ten concerts played in seven different countries.



Outside Ourense Cathedral: Robin Blaze (right) with Emma Kirkby alongside Ashley Solomon and other Florilegium players

## BECOMING A FRIEND

Florilegium prides itself on a close relationship with its audiences, expressed through Friends of Florilegium. Friends' benefits and privileges include:

- A **FREE** copy of Florilegium's limited edition compilation CD
- A regular Newsletter
- Priority booking for concerts promoted by Florilegium
- Complimentary or discounted CDs as they are released
- Social events providing opportunities to meet the members of Florilegium

### Director's Circle members

- receive up to 3 free CDs a year
- are acknowledged in Florilegium's concert programmes
- are invited to attend rehearsals

**Please see left hand column for contact details.**



## Player profile: Bojan Čičić new Principal Violin introduces himself



Born in a "picturesque" suburb of Zagreb, Bojan realised early on that he didn't really fit into his surroundings. Coming from a musical family he was sent to play the violin and promptly sobbed: "I want to play the piano!" He also began tennis lessons; Croatia is well known for producing some fine champions. Bojan sadly wasn't to become one of them. Instead, he terrified his neighbours for years, trying to create music that didn't sound like a cat being strangled.

Finally managing to produce a sound that would melt icebergs and later woo women, he gave up on tennis. "The fees are getting ridiculously expensive" was the explanation given by his parents. Et voilà, yet another child plunges headlong towards the uncertain future of a musician.

Bojan seemed to have chosen the right road until the day he met his Nemesis, Paganini Caprices. Although having nothing against this lovely music and the heavenly sounds Paganini gave to this World, Bojan questioned the priorities of the academies, which he was hoping to join. These institutions placed so much emphasis on the technique of 19<sup>th</sup> century virtuosic playing, rather than the early styles of, for example, Mozart and Bach. It has taken Bojan many years to realize that there was more to life than the academic syllabus was offering. Here was the turning point, Bojan saw the light and discovered true love in the sound world of gut strings. Not caring which family of instruments they belonged, as long as it had real intestines stretched over a slightly lower bridge with funny shaped bows. The fact that the closest thing to Paganini was Pissendel, was an added bonus.

In order to find out more about this repertoire, he left his job as a modern musician in Zagreb, packed his things and moved to Paris to study Early Music, speaking no French. Ahhh, Paris, the world's capital of kindness to foreigners where one is always welcomed with open arms. Bojan had only one option to escape this everyday problem, immerse himself fully into the music he studied, which was, of course, mostly French Baroque. Today he admits this isn't everyone's cup of tea, but together with a bath and some Prosecco, it's a jolly good way to relax! In general, his two years in Paris were spent trying to cope with a beautiful language, amazing architecture and Gallic gestures he's still wondering at the true meaning of, much to the delight of his friends across the Channel.

Bojan left the beautiful romantic city of Paris for a damp basement at the Barbican, also known as the pit with no mobile phone reception or the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he studied with Rachel Podger. He finally settled in dreamy Oxford with his wife Jess, a real treat after the frantic buzz of the Capital, although the mobile signal was still not much better.

Four years after stepping off Eurostar to begin a new life in yet another country, Bojan joined Florilegium.

## Florilegium enjoy a trip to Singapore

The new decade's concerts started with Florilegium's first visit to Singapore. After many months of planning, the second week of January saw the players (mainly from London, but one from the Czech Republic) and four Bolivian singers meet up in Singapore. Henry Villca, who had the easiest journey of any of the singers, as he was coming from his home in Amsterdam, missed his flight and arrived 24 hours late! But the three ladies all arrived on time. Karina Troiano, a new soprano soloist flew from Bolivia, via Spain and Italy. While Katia and Gian-Carla, with Singapore being the antipodes from Singapore, flew the other way round the world, via Miami, Dallas and Tokyo. The first day was spent at leisure, sightseeing the beautiful island.

Then it was down to work. The next day started with Ashley teaching at a girls' school. He is seen here showing the children a baroque flute, which none would have ever seen before.



Following that he, Bojan and Christopher gave masterclasses at the Singapore Conservatoire of Music. Finally they all joined forces for the rehearsal, before the concert the following day. Singapore's premier daily newspaper (Straits Times) reviewer wrote "What



distinguished the works was a lack of pretence and an unalloyed joy. Their encore drew a standing ovation. This breath of fresh air deserved nothing less"

After five happy days away, it was back to the airport. (l-r: Judith Evans, bass; James Johnstone, harpsichord/ organ; Bojan Cicic, violin; Ashley Solomon, director/flute/recorder; Jean Paterson, violin; Bart, the concert promoter; Christopher Poffley, cello.

## Round-up of other performances

In a busy year of Pergolesi, there were other notable performances which must not be overlooked. The group, with Johannette Zomer (soprano) gave three concerts in Belgium and The Netherlands, including a concert and live radio broadcast to a capacity (2,500 seats) **Amsterdam Concertgebouw**.

Other events overseas included the now-regular appearance by Florilegium at the biennial early music festival in the Bolivian Missions. This time Ashley collaborated with a Bolivian producer (Gustavo Navarro) to record a 4<sup>th</sup> volume of Bolivian baroque music, the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume with the chamber choir Arakaendar Bolivia, returning to Concepcion where Florilegium recorded their first two CDs.

Another regular date in the schedule is the one-week Summer School in Prachatice (Czech Republic). Florilegium deliver masterclasses on recorder, flute, violin, cello and harpsichord, coach chamber music and perform a concert in the lovely baroque church in the town square.

His dream had been to play in the same ensemble his teacher had started her career in. So Bojan completes the circle, from teacher to student, capturing the pioneering spirit Florilegium has been renowned for throughout the years and ventures into a new decade with his newly found friends.

On the orchestral front, two concerts were given in the **Royal Festival Hall** with The Bach Choir; the annual St Matthew Passion and, this year, a B Minor Mass. The choir was formed in 1876 in order to give the first UK performance of the B Minor Mass.

The concert with the highest profile this summer had to be Florilegium's debut at the **Edinburgh International Festival**, for a concert of Bolivian Baroque in August. This concert was recorded by BBC Radio 3 for broadcast in *The Early Music Show* in September.

## LOOKING AHEAD: FLORI'S 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Next season will be Florilegium's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The culmination of the year's celebration will be a weekend of concerts at London's Wigmore Hall on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2011. These concerts will comprise the complete Brandenburg Concerti and Orchestral Suites. In addition we will be joined by Dame Emma Kirkby (President of Friends of Florilegium), as well as three original members of the ensemble – Rachel Podger (guest director), Neal Peres Da Costa (harpsichord) and Daniel Yeadon (cello/viola da gamba). There is also a reception planned for Friends of Florilegium following the concert on 3<sup>rd</sup> July.