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Musica Pacifica

JUDITH LINSENBURG, recorder
INGRID MATTHEWS & SHIRA KAMMEN, violins
GRETCHEN CLAASSEN, viola da gamba
DEREK TAM, harpsichord
PETER MAUND, percussion

2:30 PM, Sunday, October 7, 2018
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
University of the Pacific

Dancing in the Isles

- A Sonata of Scots Tunes** (1740) James Oswald
Largo - O Mother what shall I do
Adagio - Ettrick Banks
Andante - She rose and let me in
Largo - Cromlit's Lilt
Andante - Polwart on the Green
(Scotland/London, 1710-1769)
- Suite from Abdelazer** (1695) Henry Purcell
Overture - Rondeau - Menuet - Hornpipe - Jigg
(London, 1659-1695)
- Suite No. 4 in C major**, from the *Broken Consort*, Part I (1661) Matthew Locke (1621/2-1677)
Fantazie - Courant - Ayre - Saraband 2 vlns and bc
- Divisions on "John come kiss me now"** from the *Division Violin* (1685) Thomas Baltzar (1630-1663)
violin, bc, percussion
- Traditional Irish Tunes** arr. Elizabeth Blumenstock
Bridget Cruise (Turlough O'Carolan)
Planxty Toby Peyton II (O'Carolan)
Larry O'Gaff
The Kid on the Mountain
The Mountain Rose

Intermission

- Traditional Scots Tunes** arr. Blumenstock
Johnnie Faa
The Gordon
My Lane Leg
Tullymet Hall
Lord Saltoun
- A Jacobean Masque**
The Temple Anticke Anon.
La Volta William Byrd (c.1543-1623) after Thomas Morley
Cuperaree or Graysin Anon.
The Fairey Masque Robert Johnson (c.1583-1633)
rec, harpsichord, percussion, bc
- 3 Parts upon a Ground** Purcell
- English Country Dances** arr. Musica Pacifica
Newcastle
Rufty Tufty
Irish Lamentation
Scotch Cap
Jack's Maggot

For bookings, contact Judith Linsenberg, director: 510-459-5958, judy@musicapacifica.org

Season Sponsor: C. A. Webster Foundation

ARTIST PROFILE



Since its founding in 1990, Musica Pacifica has become widely recognized as one of America's premier baroque ensembles, lauded for both the dazzling virtuosity and the warm expressiveness of its performances. They have been described by the press as "some of the finest baroque musicians in America" (*American Record Guide*) and "among the best in the world" (*Alte Musik Aktuell*).

At home in the San Francisco Bay area, the artists perform with Philharmonia Baroque and American Bach Soloists, and appear with many other prominent early music ensembles nationally and abroad. The *Washington Post* noted: "the effect was transporting – a small miracle of precision and musical electricity. *Cinemusical* recently said: "Musica Pacifica remains one of the most interesting ensembles available."

They have performed on some of the most prestigious concert series in the U.S., including the Boston and Berkeley Early Music Festivals, Music Before 1800 and the Frick Collection (NY), the Getty Museum (Los Angeles), the Cleveland Art Museum, Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, DC), Pittsburgh Renaissance and Baroque, Seattle Early Music Guild, Early Music Society of the Islands (Victoria, BC) and Houston Early Music Society.

The ensemble has been featured at the Berkeley Early Music Festival three times, and their first appearance there was cited in *Early Music* (UK) as "perhaps the standout of the entire festival." Their appearance on the mainstage at the Boston Early Music Festival in 2015 was reviewed as "little short of sensational... astonishing... breath-taking throughout."

They have performed at festivals in Germany and Austria and have been heard on German National radio as well as on National Public Radio's "Harmonia" and "Performance Today" and on Minnesota Public Radio.

Musica Pacifica's nine CD releases on the Virgin Classics, Dorian, Solimar, and Navona labels have won national and international awards, including the highest ratings in several CD magazines and being chosen as "CD of the Month" by the early music journal *Alte Musik Aktuell*.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, a vivid range of musical styles co-existed in the British Isles. French and Italian musicians were transforming the cultural life of London, while at the same time centuries-old English, Irish, and Scottish musical traditions still thrived in the rural villages of the rugged hinterlands. The rhythmic vigor and melodic liveliness of so many Scots and Irish tunes appealed to the sophisticated London audiences as an emblem of their native culture.

The collision of this rich native repertoire with the new Italian and French fashions in art music made for a fascinating mix of high and low, exotic and local. Composers and audiences began to favor a blending of musical styles and idioms from across the British Isles and throughout the European continent. Today's program celebrates the variety that made the musical culture of 17th and 18th century Great Britain such a rich and diverse one.

During the intense and long-lasting period of infatuation with all things Scottish that swept the Continent in the 18th century, many composers and poets fell under the sway of evocative Celtic tunes. James Oswald's compositions "in the Scotch Taste" were especially appealing to genteel audiences. Oswald was a composer, concert promoter and music publisher who began his career as a dancing instructor in the Scottish lowlands.

Oswald published a hugely popular "Curious Collection of Scots Tunes" in Edinburgh around 1740; among this collection was his "Sonata of Scots Tunes." It is a characteristic hybrid in which Scots folk tunes are provided with a fashionably Corellian bass line, and pieces of different character are juxtaposed to form a delightful entertainment, more for the salon than for the dance-hall.

The Restoration of the Stuart monarchy, following the death of Cromwell, was a period of cultural experimentation in England unlike any

before or perhaps since. It was marked by a fascination with foreign music, literature, costume and design, and the re-opening of the public theaters provided many opportunities for playwrights and composers alike. Purcell's incidental music for "Abdelazer (or The Moor's Revenge)" was composed during the last year of his life for a play by the consummate Restoration dramatist, novelist, libertine, royal favorite, alleged spy and independent woman-of-wit, Aphra Behn. The suite is a typically Purcellian mixture of musical styles, including a French overture, an English hornpipe and the composer's rendition of an Irish jig. The Hornpipe was used as the tune for an English Country Dance titled "Hole in the Wall," though for a slow dance at about half the tempo! The Rondeau is perhaps most familiar to modern audiences as the central theme for the set of variations in Benjamin Britten's "Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra."

Renowned as a composer of instrumental music and opera, Matthew Locke flourished with the return of the Stuart monarchy and renewal of the arts that followed. He composed incidental music for the coronation of Charles II in 1661, and the following year was appointed Organist and Composer in Ordinary to the King. Records indicate that he was an extremely cantankerous and difficult individual. Nevertheless, he became close friends with the young Henry Purcell, who learned a great deal from him and eventually succeeded Locke to his positions at court. Locke was a fervent believer in upholding the indigenous English musical character and resisting the fashionable influences that were then sweeping in from Italy and France. The little "Suite in C Major" is a fine example of Locke's bracing and original style: The opening Fantazie is distinguished by mercurial shifts in mood and dramatic harmonic contrasts; the Courante makes use of clever imitative techniques; the melancholy Almande keeps us off balance with its irregular

and unpredictable phrase lengths; the Saraband (a quick dance during this period) startles with its rhythmic games—only the most confident could possibly dance to this music!

Thomas Baltzar was a German violinist and composer who immigrated to England in 1655, where he was widely admired for his astonishing technique (one diarist reported that after Baltzar's performance, the other musicians present "flung-downe their instruments, as acknowledging a victory"). His divisions, or variations, on the popular song "John Come Kiss Me Now" appear in a collection known as "The Division Violin," produced in 1685 by publisher John Playford. This set of 26 tunes by various composers represented the height of violin technique in 17th century England.

The boundaries between folk and classical music from Scotland and Ireland are blurry, to say the least. There may be some influence both ways: many Scottish and Irish dance tunes retain the two-part structure and continuous driving rhythms of baroque dances, while (as we heard with Oswald) many Baroque composers tried their hand at "domesticating" these popular tunes in the musical language that was currently fashionable. This music has enjoyed an enormous resurgence in popularity in the last few decades, with folk, rock, crossover, and "fusion" performers all adding their own spin to this wonderful and adaptable repertoire. We have arranged suites for Musica Pacifica in this spirit. It is likely that the earliest versions of Scots and Irish tunes were performed without even the accompaniment of a bass line; some tentative and often uninspired bass lines were composed during the 18th century, but there was little in the way of counterpoint or countermelodies offered during the Baroque era.

For the landed gentry, Irish melodies seem to have been regarded as even more exotic than Scots tunes. In the 17th century, aristocratic Gaelic society was in the decline, and the ruling nobles of Ireland were more interested in establishing polite society along urban English lines. Traditional tunes tended to be relegated to the middle and lower classes. One of the few individual musical voices that survives from this time is the distinguished harpist Turlough O'Carolan; he devoted several airs to commemorating his first love, Bridget Cruise. O'Carolan's collection also includes several examples of a "planxty;" this is a harp tune of supportive and animated character, a jig in slow triple time. It may have the meaning of "a health to" (from "slainte"), since planxties are all dedicated to a particular person: in this case, a certain Toby Peyton. Larry O'Gaff is a double jig, while Kid on the Mountain (also known as Bottle of Wine) is a slip jig in several sections. The Mountain Rose was a very popular reel known also by many other names.

Johnny Faa was a prominent title among the Scottish Gypsies, and as early as 1540 was recognized by James V of Scotland as the "lord and earl of Egypt." One of these Gypsy Kings is said to have run away with the wife of the Earl of Cassillis in 1643. Lady Cassillies Lilt, or Johnny Faa, the Gypsiey Laddie turns up in a 17th century manuscript in the Skene collection. The Gordon also appears in several early Scottish lute collections; it is my lame leg I left behind and is also known as The Old Woman of the Milldust. Lord Saltoun's Reel is named after a member of the large Fraser clan. Although the counter-melody introduced by the recorder at the end of Lord Saltoun is best known for its associations with a contemporary cartoon sailor, the "Popeye" theme is actually an 18th century hornpipe.

A very different musical language is heard next in the English court masque. The masque was a form of

entertainment, popular from the late 16th to the late 17th centuries, combining music, dance, costume, scenery, and machinery. The dances in the masque fell into two broad categories: the main masque dances (here represented by Cuperaree) were theatrical dances by the nobility, using choreography that celebrated order and hierarchy. The Antimasques (or Antickes) were burlesque dances performed by professional dancers and acrobats. Their music was characterized by frequent changes of meter and tempo, swift modulations, alternation of contrasting moods, and often ending with a lively dance of popular origin. The Temple Anticke and The Fairey Masque are such dances.

Besides the noble dances and the antic antimasque, there were also social dances featured in the masque, when the noble stars of the spectacle would take partners from the audience. One daring couple's dance was the Volta, a species of galliard, in which the woman is boosted by her partner in a particularly extravagant leap—one of few moments in which a lady's leg would be seen by polite company. Byrd's La Volta is dedicated to his patrons, the Morleys. Ottorino Respighi was to use the same tune three centuries later in his "Ancient Airs and Dances."

Another dance-inspired piece, Henry Purcell's Chaconne "Three Parts upon a Ground," is one of the masterpieces of English music. Here, a simple repeated bass-line (the ground) is repeated 28 times, rounded off with a final coda derived from its last four notes. Though undated, scholars believe that Purcell probably wrote the piece between 1680 and 1683, while he was also writing the great Fantazias for viol and the more modern violin Sonatas of Three Parts. Like the Fantazias, Three Parts upon a Ground is a tribute to the great English tradition of contrapuntal complexity. Purcell displays all his considerable learning in adding as many canonic tricks

as he can (and carefully labels them all in the score!). But it is also a work inflected by modern developments: the chaconne dance-rhythm that permeates the entire piece is derived from the great chaconnes of French operatic composers, while the virtuosic figuration that is traded at top speed among all the treble parts is deeply Italianate in character.

The next set of English country dance tunes is taken from John Playford's great collection, "The English Dancing Master." This anthology first appeared in 1651, and continued through many editions in the decades to follow, incorporating all the most popular tunes of the day. It was designed as a practical collection for dancing; indeed, some of these tunes remained standards at country-house balls well into the 20th century. But many of Playford's catchy melodies were also seized upon by the virtuosi of the day as the subject for imaginative variations. Here we offer our own improvisations upon these tunes.

The evocative names of these dances sometimes have associations we can guess at: "ruffy tufty," for example, is soldier's slang for battered equipment and dirty uniforms, gear that is worn by hard use. Irish Lamentation is related to a tune known as "Limerick's Lamentation," commemorating the siege and fall of Limerick to English forces in 1691; it appears, in various versions, in several 18th century collections of Irish and Scottish airs. Some have suggested that Scotch Cap refers to a nightcap or a last drink, rather than a bonnet; the tune turns up in the earliest editions of Playford. The vividly-named Jack's Maggot takes its name from the 17th century term for a whimsical or fantastical idea.

63RD SEASON

2018-2019

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2:30 PM Sunday, September 16, 2018
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- Concert programs are subject to change without notice.
- Seating is unreserved for the 2018-19 Season.
- Contributions, including memorials, are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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