



Friday 22 October, 7.30pm
St Martin's Church

MYTHS & LEGENDS OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

Canzona

Theresa Caudle *violin*
Mark Caudle *viola da gamba*
Alastair Ross *harpsichord*

with
Stuart O'Hara *bass-baritone*

The music

Jean-Philippe Rameau 1683–1764 Cantata for bass, violin and continuo: 'Aquilon et Orithie'

Rameau Pièces de clavecin en concert No. 5:
La Forqueray, La Cupis, La Marais

Louis-Nicolas Clérambault 1676–1749 Cantata for bass, violin and continuo: 'La mort d'Hercule'

short interval

Jean-Marie Leclair 1697–1764 Sonata in B flat Op. 5 No. 4

Marin Marais 1656–1728 Le Labyrinthe (Pièces de viole Livre 4)

Rameau Cantata for bass, violin and continuo: 'Thétis'

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By the end of the 17th century in France, the Greek legends known from the plays of Euripides, the poetry of Virgil and Ovid, the histories of Plutarch and a large canon of classical literature were being subjected to intense re-examination in personal and moral terms and in the light of the Christian religious movements and rationalist philosophy of the age, by Louis XIV's favoured dramatist, Jean Racine (1639-1699). In his preface to *Phèdre*, Racine writes: *I have been very scrupulous in trying to follow the classical account ... She is involved in an unlawful passion at which she is the very first to be horrified.* It is the detailed revelation of the consequences of this inner conflict that is at the centre of the tragic drama and exemplifies Racine's engagement with a new approach to the ancient myths, so familiar to his contemporaries, which personalises the presentation of tragedy and disaster on the stage (although this was never displayed as physical action), and also enriches the quality and sympathy of the representation of women and their mentality, subject to the course of their tragic situations. In Quinault's librettos for Lully's *tragédies en musique*, baroque conventions had ensured less disturbing tragic conclusions relieved by divine intervention; characters are driven more by external acts and events and the supernatural than by the credible consequences of human nature. Racine's influence can be clearly seen in Charpentier's great opera, *Médée* (1693) where Thomas Corneille had adapted his libretto based on an earlier play by his more celebrated elder brother, increasing complexities of both plot and examination of the inner motivation of the central character.

The period between the death of Lully in 1687 and Rameau's first opera, *Hippolyte et Aricie*, 1733 (itself based on Racine's *Phèdre*) has been considered a barren interlude in the creativity and innovation of French composers for the opera and other musical genres. La Dixmérie wrote (1769); *(Lully's) immediate successors achieved even less ... they crawled along behind him ... Campra and Destouches ... thought themselves incapable of doing better, and the public agreed. ... Desmarests, Charpentier and Marais (who deserves some honour) ... fought only with the same weapons. Eventually Rameau appeared ... and had too much taste to cling to old practices that were monotonous, restricted and stale.* Yet our programme is largely composed of music from those years which is unsurpassed in quality and invention!

The genesis of the *Cantate* in France was the result of a combination of political, cultural and philosophical events. Religious wars, financial collapse, famine and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 leading to the Huguenot refugee crisis, meant that Louis XIV ceased to initiate grand and expensive court entertainments and literary and musical life was concentrated in the Parisian and provincial *salons* and *académies* where musical performance and subsequently the involvement of musicians such as Rameau and François Couperin played an increasingly important role. For this milieu Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, following some theatrical failures of operas set to his libretti, gave himself the task of creating poetry suitable for musical setting. He took the Italian Cantata as his model for both poetry and musical structure, sometimes employing the *da capo* form (usually shortened) and sometimes the binary French *air*, setting episodes from classical literature but generally supplying a lighter moral conclusion concerning the nature of worldly love. The *divertissements* that had sometimes been interludes in *opéra* or *ballet* had incorporated fragments of classical tales and these also provided part of the model for the *cantate*. The standard form consisted of three recitatives (usually in the French style evolved generally from Lully) and three airs in a manner more clearly influenced by Italian models. The recitatives generally consist of longer lines of verse containing 12 syllables and the *airs* shorter lines of eight. Rousseau supplied his cantata texts in the first years of the 18th century to the composers Morin, Bernier and Montéclair and himself. *Cantates* for the solo bass voice are characterised by dramatic scenes of tempest or battle and passages where the voice is principally in unison with the continuo producing an effect of power and nobility are contrasted with fully independent melodic lines that enrich the harmony and enhance the emotional range of the musical *Affekt*.

Jean-Philippe Rameau was born in Dijon and although now celebrated for his operas, he did not compose his first opera until the age of 50. His early musical activity consisted of composing motets for the church and as an organist (he had a Jesuit education) and violin playing, although he claimed later that he had loved opera from the age of 12. He moved to Paris in 1706 where he published his 1st book of harpsichord suites and it was at this time that his *cantates* were composed. Both *Aquilon et Orithie* and *Thétis* were composed in 1715. In 1727 Rameau wrote to Antoine de la Motte, the leading writer of opera libretti after Quinault, to ask him to provide an opera libretto quoting his *cantates* as evidence of his abilities and potential to compose dramatic music. ... *two cantates ... whose mss are so widely disseminated in France that I did not think I should have them engraved unless I add a few more which I cannot for lack of words ... the other has the title Thétis where you will see the degree of anger which I assign to Neptune and Jupiter according to whether it belongs to either and according to whether the orders of both are executed.*

Rameau's *Aquilon* is a mythical personification of the north wind and when *Orithie* rejects him, in his second *récitatif* he resolves to win her by violence and in his second *air* he uses the power of his natural force to carry her off. However, the final *air* suggests that to win the love of a woman, one should rather try always to please her. The music of the three *airs* is generally in the Italian style; for example the instruments introduce a motive, the voice presents the first line of text and is then interrupted by the instruments before the movement proceeds; the so-called *devise*. But though the form is Italian, the shape and structure of the melodic phrases is French and recognisably, in a not quite mature version of the vocal style of Rameau's operas. The *récitatifs* bear no resemblance to the Italian recitative and indeed Rameau was and is known for the skill and literary sensitivity of his musical setting of the French language in *récitatif*, which is judged to excel even that of his model, Lully.

In the *cantate*, *Thétis* (the Nereid or sea nymph, later the wife of *Peleus* and mother of *Achilles*), *Jupiter* and *Neptune* contest for her love using their respective powers of thunder and storm and the raging seas, but she eventually chooses a human lover (*Peleus*). The 1st *air* has the character of an Italian 'flight' aria and the 2nd *air* is a tempestuous battle recalling *Marais'* archetypical storm scene from the opera, *Alcyone* (1706). In the 3rd *air gracieux* the narrator dismisses the raging and frustrated gods and commends *Thétis'* choice of simply the most pleasing lover. Right from the introductory *Prélude* this is a highly dramatic work and recalls the grand scale of emotions of the *tragédie lyrique* more than the *cantate*.

Rameau was the author of six major theoretical works; the first and most well known is his *Traité de L'Harmonie* (1722), and his intense studies into the science of the nature of musical composition, harmony and technique placed him at the centre of the intellectual movement and personages associated with the Enlightenment. From 1731 he was director of music for the household of *La Pouplinière*, an important patron of the Enlightenment, and his associates included the *encyclopédistes* *Diderot* and *D'Alembert*, *Voltaire* and his adversary, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. Even when his music seems to conform to the genres or mode of his times, a deeper level of intellectual enquiry and understanding is present which gives evidence of the unusual scope of Rameau's musical mind. His originality is revealed in the unique collection of *Pièces de clavecin en concert* for harpsichord accompanied by violin and basse de viole which mark his return to composing for harpsichord after a long break in 1741. Perhaps inspired by the publication of *Mondonville's* sonatas Op. 3 for harpsichord with violin in 1731 which he references in the preface to his publication, the writing for harpsichord is brilliant, in a more modern style than the earlier *pièces de clavecin* and is complemented by the sustained voices of the violin and viol. The viol rapidly switches between registers; sometimes a second voice to the violin and sometimes supporting the bass. Each of the three movements of the 5th *concert* carries a dedication and because they are dedications rather

than portraits, most likely refer to living persons: his colleagues, the violists, Roland Marais and Jean-Baptiste Forqueray rather than their fathers. Rameau orchestrated the central movement, dedicated to the dancer, Marie-Anne Cupis in the prologue to his pastoral *divertissement, Le temple de la Gloire* which confirms the theatricality of this movement and indeed, the whole collection recalls the spirit of his music for the stage.

Louis-Nicolas Clérambault was the son of a violinist in *Les vingt-quatre Violons du Roi* and studied both with his father and the organist Jean-Baptiste Moreau of the royal establishment of St Cyr, which was under the patronage of the pious Mme de Maintenon. He learned to compose all forms of instrumental music and produced serious vocal music and *divertissements* and dramatic music for the great Jesuit Colleges and the Desmoiselles of St Cyr alongside his role as organist, eventually at St Cyr, St Sulpice and the church of the Jacobins de la rue Saint-Jacques. He published books of harpsichord and organ music but it was his *cantates* that both his public and he himself most valued: *At one of our concerts a Frenchman was heard to exclaim with great surprise, 'What sirs! Can it be that you are not familiar with the cantates of Clérambault ...? These are works of the utmost beauty and few could match the graciousness of their melody, the power of their accompaniment or the demands of their performance.'* The chronicler, Titon du Tillet writes: ... *what added most to his reputation was his wonderful talent for cantates. He had the honour of performing them before Louis XIV when his majesty heard them with pleasure; this prince had several cantate texts given to the composer which he set to music and which were performed in the apartment of Mme de Maintenon. It is these that form the 3^d book of his collection (1716).* Even though all his *cantates* were generally recognised for their serious and masterful quality, because of the special circumstances of the composition of this collection, the musical language is more conservative and less Italianate than that of his other *cantates*. *La mort d'Hercule* is the last of these works and although Hercules had long been associated with the bravery and strength required of a ruler, here he is on the point of death, accidentally poisoned by the gift of his forsaken wife, Dejanira who had unknowingly given him the shirt poisoned by the toxic blood of the centaur, Nessus who had tried to seduce her and been killed by Hercules. There are four pairs of *récitatifs* and *airs*. The first implores Dejanira to reflect on her jealousy and act with kindness. The succeeding *récitatif / air* pairs place Hercules at the centre of attention; first in his rage and then in his agony. As always, the final *air* presents the moral: love deceives because it masks inevitable pain and suffering. It might be questioned why the King chose such a pessimistic text for this *cantate*, but perhaps the tale mirrors how, in his last days, he could reflect on the events of his reign with the awareness that all the triumphs and trials of life, love and war were in the past and he could now face his end with resignation.

Jean-Marie Leclair was born in Lyon and in his maturity became far more than a violinist who composed music to display his own talents as a performer. The events of his life meant that he was able to reconcile Italian abstraction and French dance as a natural result of his experiences rather than a process of conscious eclecticism. His first profession was as a dancer, choreographer and *maître de danse* in Lyon, Rouen and finally in Turin where he also composed some theatre music. He returned to Paris in 1723 where he published his 1st book of violin sonatas but then resumed his career as a dancer in Turin. There he encountered Quantz and Somis, the pupil of Corelli, who persuaded him to concentrate on the violin. From that time he pursued an international career besides royal appointments, frequent performances at the *concerts spirituels* and published sonatas, trios and concerti. His travels as a performer led to fruitful meetings with musicians such as Pietro Locatelli, the publication of whose violin works in France he facilitated. Eventually conflict with his rival for supremacy as a violinist in Paris, Guignon led him to leave for the Netherlands but in 1746 his opera, *Scylla et Glaucus* was produced in Paris and he entered the service of the Duc de Gramont in his private theatre at Puteaux. In 1758 he retired to an obscure life in Paris, where he was stabbed to death in 1764. The Op. 5 violin sonatas (1734), dedicated to Louis XV, are the third of his four sets of

violin sonatas. The 4th sonata is a particularly melodious example where virtuosity is always at the service of beauty of melody and harmony. The first two of the four movements are very much in the Italian style, the second movement being in a manner closer to the Italian *allemanda* than the French *allemande*. The *sarabande* reminds us of Leclair's early career as a dancer and his mastery of the classic dance forms especially as, of all the dances, this was the one where the dancer could show his most masterful virtuosity. Leclair includes a French *sarabande* in many of his sonatas and it is clear that he considered this the most essential element of his national heritage. The decorative figures of the extended *chaconne* are mostly of an Italianate character. The bass line consists of four descending notes of the scale throughout, but the string bass often has independent figuration.

Marin Marais has more significance as a musician than just his performances and compositions for the *basse de viole*. He directed and composed operas, ballets and chamber music and the opera *Alcyone* in particular was noted by his contemporaries for its innovation in the use of the orchestra and the celebrated and much imitated tempest. Even in the *Pièces de viole* new concepts are introduced through the series of five *livres*, nowhere more than in the section titled *Suite d'un goût étranger* in the 4th book. *Le Labyrinthe*, from this suite, is a new form of instrumental music: a work which retells a known story without words or visual representation in action or dance. This is both an answer to and a confrontation with opinions like those of D'Alembert (1759): *The prodigious quantity of sonatas we have by (the Italians) count for nothing. All this purely instrumental music has no purpose or aim, speaks to neither the mind nor the soul ... An instrumental movement should be explained to the audience by means of appropriate visual means ...*. Nowadays 'programme music' is accepted and understood but Marais was challenged to find entirely new ways to tell his tale in the medium of music without visual support. A recurring 'promenade' figure appears in different tonalities to illustrate Theseus seeking his uncertain path through the labyrinth. The music passes through every possible key, rendering 18th-century notation almost inadequate. There are pauses for doubt and reflection before the central point where the Minotaur is confronted, slain and dies and Theseus makes his way back out of the labyrinth following the thread with more confident steps, finally celebrating his triumph, perhaps together with his new love, Ariadne, in a grand *chaconne*.

The texts

Aquilon et Orithie

1. Récitatif

Que j'ai bien mérité la froideur d'Orithie,
s'écrioit Aquilon, rebuté des mépris
de la beauté dont il étoit épris.
Ma flâme, disoit-il, en fureur convertie
va faire succéder à mes soins les plus doux,
à mon respect, à mon obeissance,
une barbare violence,
un impitoiable couroux!

How well I deserved Orithie's coldness,
cried Aquilon, rebuked by the disdain
of this beauty by which he was smitten.
My desire, he said, converted into fury,
will cause my sweetest feelings,
my respect and my submission, to be followed
by a barbaric violence,
a merciless rage!

2. Air

Un amant tel que moi, doit-il prouver sa flame,
par les désirs les plus discrets?
Et de quoy m'ont servis mille soupirs secrets,
mille voeux trop soumis
qu'avoit formé mon amè?

Should a lover such as I demonstrate his ardour
by a most discreet of desires?
And what have I gained from a thousand secret sighs,
a thousand so submissive wishes
that my soul has formed?

3. Récitatif

Peut etre d'Orithie aves moins de douceur
la fierté sera surmontée.
Eprouvons du moins si son coeur,
trop insensible a la tendre langueur
peut céder aux transports d'une ardeur irritée.

Maybe, with a little less gentleness,
Orithie's pride will be overcome.
Let us try and see if her heart,
so insensitive to tender patience,
will yield to fits of an angry passion.

4. Air

Servez mes feux a vôtre tour,
force indomptable affreuse rage!
Que tout l'univers en ce jour
soit en proye a vôtre ravage!
Pénétrez dans le seins des mers,
confondez le ciel et la terre,
portez jusqu'au fond des enfers,
touttes les horreurs de la guerre!

Serve my ardour in your turn
unconquerable force, frightful storm!
May the whole universe this day
be prey to your ravages!
Pierce the bosom of the ocean,
confuse the sky and the earth,
carry to the bottom of the deeps
all the horrors of war!

5. Récitatif

Après ces discours menaçants Aquilon vole,
et ses efforts puissans
inspirent aux mortels la crainte et la tristesse.
Il enlève Orithie en traversant la Grèce;
la violence de ses feux
luy fait connoitre enfin quelle en est la tendresse:
par un juste retour elle écoute ses voeux.

After these menacing words, Aquilon flew,
and his potent efforts
filled mortals with fear and sadness.
He raised up Orithie crossing Greece;
the violence of his ardour
let her to know at last what tenderness is:
by a fitting change of heart she listened to his wishes.

6. Air

On peut toujours dans l'amoureux mistere
trouver le moyen de charmer.
Celui qui devoit allarmer
devient quelque fois nécessaire.
Une beauté peut sans etre severe
refuser l'hommage d'un coeur.
Loin de l'accuser de rigueur
essayons toujours de lui plaire.

In the mystery of love, a way to charm
is always discovered.
That which may alarm
may sometimes be necessary.
A fair one may without cruelty
refuse the tribute of a lover.
Far from accusing her of harshness
let us try rather to please her.

La Mort d'Hercule

1. Récitatif

Au pied du mont Eta le vaillant fils d'Alcmeine,
du Centaure Nessus reçoit les dons affreux;
quel poison dans son sang coule de veine en veine,
et le fait succomber à son sort rigoureux.
Dejanire, Epouse inhumaine,
dans tes jaloux transports cesse de te flater
qu'un pouvoir étranger t'ameine
ce héros que tes yeux ne purent arrêter.

At the foot of Mount Eta, the heroic son of Alcmena,
received from the Centaur Nessus a fell gift.
What poison flows in his blood from vein to vein,
and makes him succumb to his painful fate.
Dejanira, inhuman wife,
In your jealousy, cease to deceive yourself
that a strange power will bring back
this hero that your eyes could not stop.

2. Air

Contre un amant qui se dégagé
n'employons que de doux efforts,
les enchantements les plus forts
ne fixent point un cœur volage;
arme si tu veux les Enfers,
L'Amour ne connaît point la crainte,
non, ce n'est jamais par contrainte
que ses sujets portent des fers.

Against a lover who is leaving
let us only use the gentlest efforts
The strongest charms do not in the least
keep a fleeing heart;
enlist if you wish Hell itself,
Love knows not fear,
no, it is never by imposition
that his subjects go armed.

3. Récitatif

Voy périr ce vainqueur de cent monstres divers,
toy-même avec effroy vien contempler ses peines.
De ses cris il remplit les airs,
et se plaint par ces mots d'avoir porté tes chaînes.

See him perish, this conqueror of a hundred different
monsters, come yourself and contemplate his
sufferings with horror. He fills the air with his cries and
with these words he complains of bearing your chains.

4. Air

Amour, funeste Amour, ah! Pourquoi
les Héros sont ils soumis à ton Empire?
Tu m'as fait aimer Dejanire;
c'est toi qui causes tous mes maux.
Mal'heureux, j'ay temy la gloire la plus pure
pour n'avoir pu te résister,
et je sens en ce jour la peine la plus dure;
Monstre affreux plus à redouter
que tous ceux dont mon bras a purgé la Nature,
c'etoit toi qu'il falloit dompter.

Love, fateful Love, Oh why are even heroes
submitted to your domination?
You made me love Dejanira;
it is you the cause of my sufferings.
Unfortunate, I have tarnished my heroic purity
by not having resisted you,
and I feel as a result the sharpest pain;
Frightful Monster! more to be distrusted
than all those I purged from Nature,
it is you that ought to be tamed!

5. Récitatif

Au seul nom de l'Amour une funeste rage
luy fait oublier ses vertus;
les monstres qu'il a combattus
causèrent moins que luy de trouble et de ravage.
Portons partout, dit-il l'épouvante et l'horreur
ne nous arrêtons pas à des menaces vaines,
si les Dieux ne sont pas attendris de mes peines,
faisons leur craindre ma fureur.

At the word of Love, a fatal rage
made him forget his great virtues;
The monsters he defeated
caused less havoc and disturbance than he.
Let horror and dismay be spread everywhere he
said; let us not deal in vain threats,
if the Gods are not moved by my pains,
let them fear my anger.

6. Air

Courrez ravagez la terre,
paraissez Monstres odieux;
aux timides Mortels venez livrer la guerre
sans craindre le courroux des Dieux.
Ils ne font tomber leur tonnerre

Come ravage the earth,
let frightful monsters appear;
let loose war on all timid mortals
without fearing the Gods' displeasure.
They can only make their thunder

que sur des Héros glorieux,
restes d'une race impure
sortez des antres les plus creux,
venez dans mon sort mal'heureux
entraînez toute la Nature.

7. Récitatif

Il dit, et se livrant au transport qui l'anime
il dresse le bûcher qui va finir ses maux;
du dangereux Amour mal'heureuse victime,
c'est ainsi que périt le plus grand des Héros.

8. Air

Ah! que tes traits sont redoutables
Amour, fatal tyran des cœurs,
tu n'as que de feintes douceurs
et tes tourmens sont véritables.
Entouré des plaisirs trompeurs
pour soumettre les cœurs rebelles
tu caches sous l'apais des fleurs
tes épines les plus cruelles.

Thétis

1. Récitatif

Muses, dans vos divins concerts
chantez ce jour, fatal au repos de la terre,
ou le puissant dieu de tonnerre,
et le terrible dieu des mers,
se livrant aux fureurs d'une cruelle guerre,
blessés des mêmes traits, des mêmes feux épris,
disputèrent le cœur de l'aimable Thétis.

2. Neptune

Volez, tyrans des airs, aquilons furieux,
de Neptune en courroux servir la rage,
excitez un affreux orage,
portez les flots jusques aux cieux.
Allez leur déclarer la guerre,
vengez son pouvoir irrité
qu'au milieu de ses feux
le fier dieu du tonnerre
ne soit même en sûreté.

3. Récitatif

Neptune en ce moment, au gré de sa fureur,
des vents impétueux presse la violence.
L'océan soulevé jusques aux cieux s'élance,
et l'Olympe, frappé d'une soudaine horreur,
anime Jupiter pour punir cette offense,
a s'armer du secours de son foudre vengeur.

4. Jupiter

Partez, volez brillans éclairs,
signalez le maître du monde.
Portez vos feux jusques dans l'onde,

on glorious heroes!
Relics of an impure race
leave your most cavernous lairs,
draw in the whole of Nature
into my tragic end.

Thus he said, and yielding to the fit
which possesses him, he erects the pyre
which will end his sufferings; the victim of fatal Love,
thus perishes the greatest of heroes.

Oh! your looks are deceptive
Love, fatal tyrant over hearts!
You have but faint joys
and your torments are only too real.
Surrounded with false pleasures
to quieten rebellious hearts
you hide under the flowers' allure
your most cruel thorns.

O Muses, in your heavenly concerts
sing of this day, fatal for peace on earth,
when the powerful god of thunder
and the terrible god of the seas,
pitting themselves in a cruel combat,
pierced by the same darts, fired by the same passion
contested the heart of the beautiful Thetis.

Fly scourges of the air, furious north winds,
deliver the rage of Neptune's wrath,
stir up a frightful storm,
carry the waves up to the skies,
Go and with them declare war,
avenge his power that has been provoked
that even surrounded by his fires
the proud god of thunder
may not feel safe.

Neptune in this instant, in a fit of fury,
unleashed the violence of his stormy winds.
The ocean heaved up and hurtled to the skies,
and Olympus, struck with a sudden horror,
roused Jupiter up to punish this attack,
to come to the rescue with his fatal thunderbolt.

Go, fly, brilliant flashes,
announce the master of the world.
Carry your lightnings even into the waves,

embrasez l'Empire du mers.
Secondez la juste vengeance
du souverain des Dieux;
faites trembler l'audacieux
qui veux mépriser la puissance.

5. Récitatif

Quel aveugle transport vous guide;
grands Dieux, calmez ce vain couroux.
Thétis pour un mortel decide;
son coeur ne scaurait etre a vous.

6. Air Gracieux sans lenteur

Beautés qu'un fort heureux destine
a choisir vous même un vainqueur.
Que l'amour seul vous determine,
ne consultez que votre coeur.
Le brillant éclat de la Gloire
ne doit point éblouir vos yeux;
ne cedez jamais la victoire
qu'un celui qui vous plait le mieux.

set on fire the realm of the seas.
Mete out the just vengeance
of the sovereign of the Gods,
let those tremble who are so foolhardy
as to challenge my power.

What blind madness has taken you;
Great Gods, calm this vain wrath.
Thetis has chosen a mortal;
her heart cannot commit to you.

Lovely ladies, your great fortune destines you
to choose your victor for yourselves.
That love alone may guide you
only consult your own heart.
The brilliant flash of glory
may not in the least dazzle your eyes;
never concede the victory
except to one who pleases you the most.

English translations by Cedric Lee, Green Man Press

The performers

Canzona was formed in 1992 and comprises some of this country's leading players of period instruments. Many of Canzona's concerts are as a chamber group and the versatility of its director Theresa Caudle, who plays both the violin and cornett, creates the stimulus for a flexible line-up of early wind, brass and string instruments. They are often joined by a singer and have performed with many distinguished soloists including Philippa Hyde, James Bowman and Peter Harvey. The players of Canzona have a particular passion for 17th-century music, but whatever they are playing, from Monteverdi to Mozart, they make every effort to play on appropriate instruments for the period.

Canzona is frequently expanded to orchestral proportions and has performed with many outstanding choirs including Polyphony and the Holst Singers (conducted by Stephen Layton). Canzona continues to have a long-standing association with several choirs including the Leith Hill Musical Festival, the Bristol Bach Choir and the Bath Abbey Choir, and the ensemble regularly performs many masterpieces of the baroque era including the Bach Passions and B minor Mass; Handel's *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*; Monteverdi's Vespers and music by Purcell and de Lalande.

Canzona has appeared at the Royal Festival Hall; St John's Smith Square; St Martin-in-the-Fields; King's College and Trinity College Cambridge; Salisbury, Wells, St Albans and Blackburn Cathedrals; and has taken part in the Three Choirs Festival and the Spitalfields Festival. In December 2014 Canzona performed *Messiah* with the Choir of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal at Buckingham Palace and in May 2016 appeared with the same choir in the Queen's Chapel, St James's Palace in a concert to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. As well as performing in London and around Britain, Canzona has given concerts in festivals as far afield as Finland and Malta.

Canzona has made two highly acclaimed recordings: Motets by André Campra on EtCetera, and Theresa Caudle and Canzona's recording *Violino o Cornetto* of 17th-century Italian sonatas for violin and cornett on Nimbus Alliance.

canzona.org.uk

Stuart O'Hara is a freelance singer based in York. A graduate of Durham University and the University of York, he is a student of Alexander Ashworth (Royal Academy of Music) and a former tutee of Robert Hollingworth (director of I Fagiolini).

Stuart maintains a busy schedule of solo, consort, and choral singing across the UK. Renowned for a wide vocal range and sensitivity to text, with a warm tone and power when necessary, he is equally happy as a recitalist, on the operatic stage, or singing polyphony in small ensembles. His specialisms include Russian and English song, and music of the Baroque era, particularly that of JS Bach.

He has worked with directors and conductors including Martin Baker (Westminster Cathedral), Eamonn Dougan (Britten Sinfonia Voices, The Sixteen), Justin Doyle (RIAS Kammerchor), Philip Duffy (Liverpool Bach Collective), JanJoost van Elburg (Westerkerkkoor, Amsterdam), Robert Hollingworth (I Fagiolini), Peter Holman (The Parley of Instruments), James MacMillan (with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra), Paul McCreesh (with the Royal Northern Sinfonia), Peter Seymour (Yorkshire Baroque Soloists), Greg Skidmore (Augustus Consort), and Andrew Parrott (Taverner Consort).

Born and bred in Liverpool, Stuart spent seven years as a Lay Clerk at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King (RC), and two as a Songman at York Minster. He is now a Lay Vicar in the Choir of Westminster Abbey.

stuartohara.wixsite.com/bass-baritone