

A PORTRAIT OF
HENRY PURCELL
directed by Peter Holman



Recorded in the Clothworkers Concert Hall,
The University of Leeds
25-27 June 2021

PROGRAMME

Nicki Sapiro, Ellie Barnard, Jenny Lucking *soprano*
Catherine Haworth, Clive McClelland *alto*
Patricia Yates *tenor*
Stuart O'Hara *bass*

Judy Tarling (leader) Asuka Sumi, Andrew Taheny *violin 1*
Derek Revill, Ilias Devetzoglou, Caroline Goddard *violin 2*
Stephen Robinson, Susan Marshall *viola*
Catherine Strachan, George Kennaway *violoncello*
Andrew Kerr *bass viol & great bass viol*
Christopher Roberts *harpsichord & organ*
Martyn Hodgson *theorbo, baroque guitar*
directed by
Peter Holman *harpsichord & organ*

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The Early Music Shop, The Friends of Leeds Baroque and several anonymous donors.

PROGRAMME

1. **Nymphs and shepherds, come away** from *The Libertine*, Act IV Z600/1 (1695)
soloist: Jenny Lucking *soprano*

2. **Remember not, Lord, our offences Z50**

Nicki Sapiro & Eleanor Barnard *soprano*

Catherine Haworth *alto*

Patricia Yates *tenor*

Stuart O'Hara *bass*

Andrew Kerr *bass viol*

Christopher Roberts *organ*

3. **Ye twice ten hundred deities** from *The Indian Queen*, Act III Z630/13 (1695)

soloist: Stuart O'Hara *bass*

4. **Airs for *The Virtuous Wife* Z611 (1694)**

First Music: Preludio & Hornpipe

Second Music: Slow Air & Air

Overture

First Act Tune: La Furstemburg

Second Act Tune: Minuet

Third Act Tune: Song Tune

Fourth Act Tune: Minuet

5. **Lord, I can suffer thy rebukes Z136**

Nicki Sapiro & Eleanor Barnard *soprano*

Patricia Yates *tenor*

Stuart O'Hara *bass*

Andrew Kerr *bass viol*

Christopher Roberts *organ*

6. **Chaconne in G minor Z807** from *Ten Sonata's of Four Parts* (pub. 1697), no. 6

Judy Tarling & Asuka Sumi *violin*

Andrew Kerr *bass viol*

Peter Holman *organ*

7. **If ever I more riches did desire Z544 (1687)**

Nicki Sapiro & Eleanor Barnard *soprano*

Patricia Yates *tenor*

Stuart O'Hara *bass*

Judy Tarling & Asuka Sumi *violin*

Andrew Kerr *bass viol*

Martyn Hodgson *theorbo*

Christopher Roberts *organ*

8. **Curtain tune upon a Ground** from *Timon of Athens* Z632/20 (1695)

9. **If love's a sweet passion** from *The Fairy Queen*, Act III Z629/17 (1692)

This musical portrait of Henry Purcell (1658/9-95), recorded under socially distanced conditions by members of Leeds Baroque in the Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall at Leeds University on Sunday 27 June 2021, offers a cross-section of his music. It ranges from domestic pieces written early in his career to excerpts from the theatre music he contributed to plays in the last few months of his short life. He was essentially a court composer from 1677, when he received a court post as Composer to the Twenty-four Violins, the court orchestra. Most of the music he wrote during the reigns of Charles II and James II, including anthems for the Chapel Royal, odes for the king's birthday and other state occasions and domestic music to entertain members of the royal family, was written for performance in various parts of the sprawling palace at Whitehall, destroyed by fire in 1698. However, after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the new monarchs, William and Mary, cut back on music at court, and Purcell (though he retained several court places) was then free to pursue a hectic career in the theatre. He contributed music to more than 50 productions in little more than five years, with the ordinary spoken plays put on at the Drury Lane Theatre, and the large-scale productions with elaborate music and scenic effects (usually called semi-operas or dramatic operas today) at the better-equipped Dorset Garden Theatre, down by the Thames at Whitefriars.

The earliest piece in today's concert is probably the four-part devotional part-song '**Lord I can suffer thy rebukes**'. It is one of a group of such pieces that Purcell wrote in 1679-80 at a time when he was exploring genres and musical techniques used by his predecessors and older colleagues, including Matthew Locke and John Blow. It is a setting of a metrical version of Psalm 6 made by the Rev John Patrick for use in the chapel at the London Charterhouse, though there is no evidence that Purcell's setting was actually sung there. Music of this sort, setting gloomy penitential texts to expressive dissonant and chromatic music, was traditionally sung in musical households on Sundays. The five-part '**Remember not, Lord, our offences**', probably composed a year or two later, sets words from the Litany in the Book of Common Prayer, and is normally thought of as a cathedral full anthem, though the mixture of anguished counterpoint and expressive declamation suggests that it too belongs to the domestic devotional tradition.

'**If ever I more riches did desire**' is the latest, longest and greatest of a group of symphony songs apparently written for performance by royal musicians at Whitehall. It is scored for four voices, two violins and continuo and can be dated by its position in Purcell's autograph score to 1686-7, during James II's reign. It sets a text by the mid-seventeenth-century poet and dramatist Abraham Cowley that deals in quasi-religious terms with moral questions: the futility of pride and ambition and the virtue of a humble, obscure life. Highlights of Purcell's sober but consistently inspired setting are the beautiful soprano duet 'Me, O ye gods' and the profound ground-bass 'Here let my life

with as much silence slide' for tenor, violin and continuo, constructed over a sombre peal of bells in the bass.

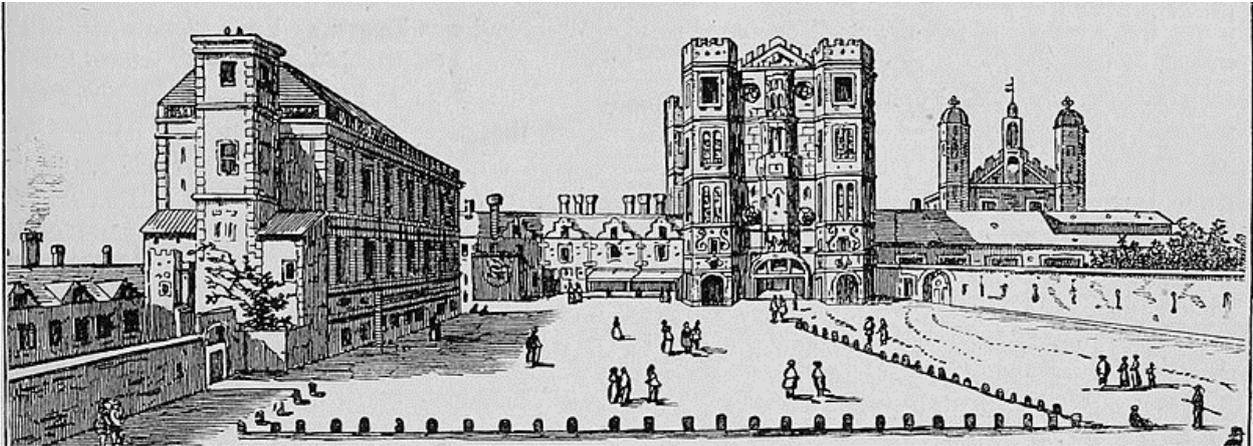
Purcell wrote settings of ground basses throughout his career, and of those for instruments one of the greatest is the **Chaconne in G minor** for two violins and continuo, no. 6 of the set of ten trio sonatas published after Purcell's death, in 1697. It was probably written in the early 1680s and uses a striking five-bar version of the traditional *passacaglia* bass, with four notes descending from tonic to dominant followed by a cadence. Purcell would have come across it in the famous part-song 'Scocca pur, tutti tuoi' by Jean-Baptiste Lully, which circulated in various versions in Restoration England; Purcell's harpsichord arrangement of it was published in 1689. His Chaconne is full of contrapuntal artifice, even introducing the ground bass in counterpoint with itself in the upper parts at one point. He never varies the bass but manages to modulate fleetingly into a number of other keys, including D minor, C minor, F major and E flat major.

Of the theatre music in this concert, the most substantial item is the set of **Airs for *The Virtuous Wife***, probably written for a revival of Thomas D'Urfey's comedy at Drury Lane in 1695. It was published after Purcell's death in a collection of such pieces arranged for concert use with the overture placed first. However, it is found in a contemporary manuscript, ordered as it would have been played in the theatre, with two pairs of pieces played as 'First Music' and 'Second Music' before the play began, rather like the gongs of modern theatres. After the fine Overture, with its urgent, dissonant first section and its closely-argued fugue on a leaping theme, come four 'act tunes' played between the five acts of the play. The first is a vigorous bourree-like air that became known as a country dance, 'St Martin's Lane', and later in France as a *contredanse*, 'La Furstemberg', while the second is a beautiful arrangement of Purcell's own song 'Ah! how sweet it is to love'.

The **Curtain Tune upon a Ground from *Timon of Athens***, also probably written in 1695 (for a revival of Thomas Shadwell's adaptation of Shakespeare's play), is another magnificent ground bass movement, constructed over a leaping theme. It is probably mislabelled in the only complete source as a 'curtain tune' (the contemporary English term for an overture) because there is another overture for this revival of the play, by James Paisible. It has been suggested that it was actually played in Act IV, Scene iii, while Timon throws stones at his tormentors.

Of the three vocal pieces from Purcell's theatre works, the best-known is '**Nymphs and shepherds come away**', if only because the first vocal section became famous from the recording made in 1929 by 250 Manchester schoolchildren. Purcell wrote it for a revival in 1695 of Thomas Shadwell's bloodthirsty tragedy based on the Don Juan legend to be performed by rustics in 'a delightful grove'; it is prefaced by an imitation of a village band and followed by a fine two-section chorus. '**Ye twice ten hundred deities**' is the famous invocation recitative and air sung by the conjurer Ismeron in Act II, Scene ii of *The Indian Queen*, the dramatic opera about conflict between the Aztecs and Incas that Purcell left unfinished at his death. Ismeron summons up the God of Dreams for the Aztec

queen Zempoalla, who seeks solace for her unrequited love for the warrior Montezuma. The beautiful minuet song and chorus 'If love's a sweet passion' was sung in Act III of *The Fairy Queen* by a troupe of Nymphs, Fauns, Dryads and Naiads in an entertainment put on by Titania for Bottom. It was enduringly popular at the time and circulated in France and the Netherlands as well as England.



Whitehall Palace c 1650

Texts

Nymphs and shepherds come away (*The Libertine*, Act IV) Z600/1 (1695)

Verse:

Nymphs and shepherds, come away.
In the groves let's sport and play,
For this is Flora's holiday,
Sacred to ease and happy love,
To dancing, to music and to poetry;
Your flocks may now securely rove
Whilst you express your jollity.
Nymphs and shepherds, come away.

Chorus:

We come, we come, we come
No joy like this
Now let us sing, rejoice,
Rejoice and kiss
The great can never know such bliss.
In these delightful, pleasant groves
Let us celebrate our happy loves
Let's pipe and dance and laugh and sing
Thus every happy thing revels in the
cheerful spring

Remember not, Lord, our offences Z50

(Litany from the Book of Common Prayer, 1559.)

Remember not, Lord, our offences,
nor the offences of our forefathers;
neither take thou vengeance of our sins:

spare us, good Lord, spare thy people,
whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood,
and be not angry with us for ever.

'Ye twice ten hundred deities' (*The Indian Queen, Act III*) Z630/13 (1695)
(Thomas Patrick Betterton - 1635 –1710 after Dryden)

Ye twice ten hundred deities To whom we daily sacrifice,
Ye pow'rs that dwell with fates below And see what men are doom'd to do,
Where elements in discord dwell: Thou god of sleep arise and tell
Great Zempoalla what strange fate Must on her dismal vision wait.
By the croaking of the toad In their caves that make abode,
Earthy dun that pants for breath With her swell'd sides full of death,
By the crested adders' pride That along the cliffs do glide,
By thy visage fierce and black, By the death's head on thy back,
By the twisted serpents plac'd For a girdle round thy waist,
By the hearts of gold that deck Thy breast, thy shoulders and thy neck,
From thy sleeping mansion rise And open thy unwilling eyes,
While bubbling springs their music keep, That used to lull thee in thy sleep

Lord, I can suffer thy rebukes Z136 (John Patrick - ?1632-1695),

Lord, I can suffer Thy rebukes When Thou dost kindly me chastise,
But Thy fierce wrath I cannot bear: O let not that against me rise.
Pity my languishing estate And those perplexities I feel;
While crushèd by Thy heavy hand, O let Thy gentler touches heal.
Lord, for Thy goodness' sake return And save my life, for in the grave
None can remember Thee, nor Thou Thankful acknowledgements can have.
See how I pass my weary days In sighs and groans, and when 'tis night,
I drown my bed and self in tears; My grief consumes and dims my sight.
Depart, ye wicked foes, your hopes Are dashed, for this my mournful voice
Will bring God nearer to my aid, When you come flocking to rejoice
The Lord hath heard my pray'r, and those that gaped upon me as their prey
Will vex themselves at their defeat And their confusion turn away.

Hallelujah.

If ever I more riches did desire Z544 (1687)

1. If ever I more riches did desire, Than cleanliness and quiet do require,
If e'er Ambition did my fancy cheat, With any wish so mean as to be great,
Continue, Heav'n, still from me to remove
The humble blessings of that life I love.

2. Upon the slipp'ry tops of human state, The gilded pinnacles of fate,
Let others proudly stand, and for a while the giddy danger to beguile,
With joy and with disdain look down on all,
Till their heads turn, and down they fall.
 3. Me, O ye Gods, on earth, or else so near, That I no fall to earth may fear,
And, O ye gods, at a good distance seat From the long ruins of the great.
Here wrap'd in the arms of Quiet let me lie; Quiet, companion of Obscurity.
Here let my life with as much silence slide
As time, that measures it, does glide.
 4. Nor let the breath of Infamy or Fame From town to town echo about my
name, Nor let my homely death embroider'd be with scutcheon or with elegy:
An old plebeian let me die. Alas, all then are such as well as I.
 5. To him, alas, to him, I fear, The face of Death will terrible appear,
Who in his life flatt'ring his senseless pride By being known to all the world
beside, Does not himself, when he is dying, know,
Nor what he is, nor whither he's to go.
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If love's a sweet passion (*The Fairy Queen*, Act III) Z629/17 (1691)
(anon – after William Shakespeare)

- 1 If love's a sweet passion why does it torment?
If a bitter, oh tell me, whence comes my content?
Since I suffer with pleasure, why should I complain,
or grieve at my fate, when I know it's in vain?
Yet so pleasing the pain is so soft as the dart,
That at once it both wounds me and tickles my heart
- 2 I press her hand gently, look languishing down,
and by passionate silence I make my love known.
But oh! How I'm blest when so kind she does prove,
by some willing mistake to discover her love.
When in striving to hide, she reveals her flame,
and in our eyes tell each other what neither dares name.



BIOGRAPHIES

Peter Holman (Director) studied at King's College, London with Thurston Dart, and founded the pioneering early music group Ars Nova while a student. He is now director of The Parley of Instruments and the choir Psalmody, is musical director of Leeds Baroque and director of the Suffolk Villages Festival. He has taught at many conservatoires, universities, and summer schools in Britain, Europe, New Zealand and the USA, and was Reader and then Professor of Historical Musicology at Leeds University from 2000, retiring as Emeritus Professor in 2010. He was awarded an MBE in 2015.

Peter is a regular broadcaster on BBC Radio 3 and 4 and is much in demand as a lecturer at learned conferences. He spends much of his time in writing and research, with special interests in the early history of the violin family, in instrumental ensemble music up to about 1700, and in English music from about 1550 to 1850. He is the author of five books: the prize-winning *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: the Violin at the English Court 1540-1690* (Oxford, 1993), *Henry Purcell* (Oxford, 1994), *Dowland: Lachrimae* (Cambridge, 1999), *Life after Death: the Viola da Gamba in Britain from Purcell to Dolmetsch* (Woodbridge, 2010), and, most recently, *Before the Baton: Musical Direction and Conducting in Stuart and Georgian Britain* (Woodbridge, 2020).

Judy Tarling (Leader) started her professional career in the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. She has been involved in early music since the seventies and a member of The Parley of Instruments since 1981. The Parley Renaissance Violin Band, which Judy leads was founded in 1985, becoming the first reconstruction of the earliest violin ensemble in modern times. With The Parley Judy has made numerous recordings for Hyperion Records.

She has introduced many players, professional and amateur to the period style both in the UK and further afield. She is the author of *Baroque String Playing for Ingenious Learners*, which has become required reading for students interested in Baroque performance, and which *Strad* magazine called 'a re-launch of the spirit of discovery in historical performance'. Judy has undertaken extensive research into the connection between oratory and musical performance, publishing *The Weapons of Rhetoric, a Guide for Musicians and Audiences*, *Speaking with Quintilian* (with Jane Oakshott) and *Handel's Messiah, a Rhetorical Guide*. The books have led to invitations to teach in Europe, Latin America and the U.S.A.



Leeds Baroque is the city's only 'period instrument' choir and orchestra specialising in performances of music of the 17th and 18th centuries. Founded in 2000, and made up of professional, student and talented amateur performers, it is directed by an international authority on the performance of this repertoire, Prof. Peter Holman MBE.

It has gained an enviable reputation for performances covering standard works from Monteverdi to Mozart as well as bold explorations of unfamiliar Baroque music. Most of the performers are unpaid, playing in the belief that this specialist, but very accessible, repertoire should be available to all and more widely appreciated. In addition to the core membership, Leeds Baroque welcomes a range of professional singers and instrumentalists, to join them for special projects and supports young performers at the outset of their professional careers.

Leeds Baroque recently ran a successful Crowd Funding project to enable the purchase of historically appropriate timpani to add to their collection of period instruments available on loan to students.

Leeds Baroque is financed solely from its ticket income and modest grant funding. When circumstances allow we hope you will help us continue to keep Baroque music alive in the region by attending our performances and supporting our online events.

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