

« Cantare e Sonare »
The art of playing and singing in Rome.



From the days of Ancient Rome, Rome has always been one of the largest, most important and wealthiest city of the Western world.

During the Renaissance, Rome was competing with Florence to remain the political and musical center of Italy and the Papacy decided to ornament the city with beautiful buildings and churches, all laden with sculptures, frescos and paintings. As a response to the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church decided that the arts should convey religious sentiments in a direct and simple way. It was essential that not just the intellectual community but that all people, could understand and absorb the message of God in art and music.

In 1654, after her clamorous abdication Cristina Vasa, who was Queen of Sweden, moved to Rome, that was in the middle of its baroque splendour. She decided to spend there the rest of her life and she became a “queen” in the reign of arts. Her palace was a place of worldliness, refined conversations, concerts, and was attended by some of the main poets, musicians, scientists and painters of that age.

She died in 1689 and the 5th of October 1690 the “Accademia dell'Arcadia” was founded with the aim of continuing and developing the research of essentiality and “buon gusto” in the arts.

Two of the main musicians members of the Arcadia were Terpandro and Arcomelo, better known nowadays with their real names Alessandro Scarlatti and Arcangelo Corelli.

Scarlatti was trained in Rome and was appointed Maestro di Cappella of San Giacomo degli Incurabili in 1678, only 18 years old. The following year he gained much success with his opera *Gli Equivoci nell'sembiante*, which also gained him the post of Maestro di Cappella at the house of Queen Christina.

Corelli, who was already a famous violinist, was for several years at service of Cristina and usually presided at the celebrated Monday concerts in Cardinal Ottoboni's palace. We present in the program a violin sonata of Corelli from "Opera quinta" and the Cantata "Quella pace gradita" by Scarlatti.

Cardinal Ottoboni, member of the Academy, important patron, musician and writer, also took under his protection Antonio Vivaldi.

Vivaldi arrived in Rome in 1722 invited from the Pope himself, he played for him and probably lived a few years in the city. From Vivaldi's vast collections we have chosen to play the Cantata "All'ombra di sospetto".

The prince Filippo II Colonna, member of the Arcadia too, recruited the musician and composer Giovanni Bononcini for his palace, a position Bononcini kept for five years. The musician dedicated to the prince's wife his Six Serenatas and at his court in Rome he also met the poet Silvio Stampiglia, one of the founders of the "Arcadia". They wrote together two operas. We have chosen one of Bononcini's "Divertimenti da camera" for flute and continuo.

In 1707 the Academy of Arcadia moved to the Villa of the Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli. In the same year Haendel arrived in Rome and being very welcomed by the promoters of art, such as the Cardinals C. Colonna and Pamphili. He was hosted by Ruspoli himself, who nominated him Maestro di Cappella. His music had a great success and was performed in many public occasions.

There are many anecdotes about Haendel's stay in Rome, as the improvisation contest at the organ where he was up against Alessandro Scarlatti or when Corelli refused to play a violin passage that extended to A in altissimo in the overture to Handel's oratorio "Il Trionfo del Tempo e Disinganno" (premiered in Rome, 1708). Corelli felt seriously offended when Haendel, 32 years his junior, played the note.

We play the seldom performed Haendel's "Concerto a quattro in Re minore".

We decided to open this concert, titled "Cantare e Sonare, the art of playing and singing in Rome" and centered on the musical life between the 17th and 18th Century in Rome with a Toccata and a Sonetto Spirituale by Girolamo Frescobaldi, pieces written about one Century before the Academy of Arcadia was founded. Frescobaldi was elected organist of St Peter's in Rome in 1608, and thereafter his fame and professional standing increased steadily, both on account of his universally admired organ and harpsichord playing, as well as the quality of his compositions.

In his music we find those conciseness and pureness that later characterized the research of the artists in the Academy of Arcadia.

PROGRAMME

Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643):

Toccata prima del primo Libro, 5'

Sonetto spirituale « Maddalena alla Croce » 4'

Andrea Tjäder, soprano

Hélène Diot, harpsichord

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)

Sonate a violino e violone o cimbalo – opera quinta 8-10'

Rebecca Huber, violin

Hélène Diot, continuo

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725):

Cantate « Quella pace gradita » 3'

Andrea Tjäder, soprano

Giuditta Isoldi, traverso

Rebecca Huber, violin

Paulina Ptak and Hélène Diot, continuo

Giovanni Baptista Bononcini (1670-1747):

Divertimenti da camera 10'

Giuditta Isoldi, traverso

Paulina Ptak and Hélène Diot, continuo

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741):

Cantate « All'ombra di sospetto » 5'

Andrea Tjäder, soprano

Giuditta Isoldi, traverso

Paulina Ptak and Hélène Diot, continuo

Georg Friedrich Haendel (1685-1759):

Concerto a quattro in d (Adagio-Allegro-Largo-Allegro), 10'

Giuditta Isoldi, traverso

Rebecca Huber, violin

Paulina Ptak, violoncello obbligato

Hélène Diot, harpsichord