

The South African Early Music Trust (SAEMT) presents

Alles was Odem hat

Baroque Music for voice and wind instruments

Saturday 24 November 16h00, Lutheran Church, Hofmeyr Street 26, Stellenbosch

Sunday 25 November 16h00 Rondebosch United Church, Belmont Road, Cape Town

- G.P. Telemann *Alles was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn.*
4 part canon
- G.P. Telemann *Seele, lerne dich erkennen.* TWV 1:1258
Cantata for Estomihi from *Der Harmonische Gottesdienst* 1725/6
for solo soprano with recorder obbligato and bc
- G.P. Telemann Third Fantasia for Treble Recorder TWV 40:4
Largo / Vivace / Largo / Vivace, Allegro
- J.S. Bach *Non sa che sia dolore* BWV 209
Cantata for soprano with transverse flute obbligato, strings and bc
- G.P. Telemann *Hemmet den Eifer, verbannet dir Rache* TWV 1:730
Cantata for Epiphany from *Der Harmonische Gottesdienst* 1725/6
for solo soprano with recorder obbligato and bc
- G.P. Telemann Concerto for recorder and transverse flute TWV 52:eI with strings and bc
Largo, Allegro, Largo, Presto

Cape Consort

Tonia Roller – Baroque recorder

Bridget Rennie-Salonen – Transverse flute

Antoinette Blyth – soprano

Annie Shaw, Valentina Koleva Vorster – Baroque violin

Emile de Roubaix – Baroque viola

Grant Brasler – harpsichord

Hans Huyssen – Baroque cello & musical direction



We thank the Rupert Music Foundation for their on-going generous support of our work.

Programme Notes

This program's motto is taken from Luther's translation of the last verse of Ps 150: *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord*. The ancient term *Odem* seems to be a deliberate reference to the Sanskrit *atman*, which connotes a broader understanding of *breath* as *life itself*, embodying the belief that the spirit or soul rides on every single life-sustaining breath. Its Latin equivalent is *spiritus*. In the context of this concert *Odem* therefore alludes to the fact that all three soloists in this programme not only create music with their breath, but are also required to do so in a spirited and inspired manner.

Odem, as the old German form of *Atem*, would arguably have become fully obsolete by now, had it not survived through Luther's translation. In turn, the phrase *Alles was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn* arguably remains present in contemporary consciousness due not in the least part to the fact that it has been set to music so often. Inevitably the phrase appears somewhere in the oeuvre of almost every single German speaking composer – Telemann and Bach certainly included.

Although the origin of Telemann's canon on this text is obscure, the short four-part round firmly belongs to the active repertoire of traditional German choral music. Its arrangement and spatial performance for today's performance intends to epitomize the programme's motto: As a sounding exploration of the concept of *atman* it refers the act of *creating music* to a *spirited way of being*, i.e. points to the complementary aspect of *breathing* as *inspiration* and *expression*.

Throughout the Renaissance and Early Baroque, recorders were arguably the most important and widespread wind instruments, their qualities as solo instrument equally cherished as their versatility in consorts of varying combinations. Even though the recorder's popularity finally declined in the 18th century – while that of the transverse flute was on the rise – Telemann continued to compose profusely for the instrument. His characteristically idiomatic and virtuosic writing confirms that he was an accomplished recorder player himself. Collections such as his *Essercizii Musici* testify that the instrument remained important as late as 1740. And even though his solo *Fantasias* were possibly originally intend for transverse flute or even violin, they explore and display the full technical and expressive scope of the recorder so well, that a rendition on recorder does full justice to both instrument and composition. That Telemann valued both the 'old-fashioned' recorder as well as the fashionable transverse flute is demonstrated in the double concerto, which overtly displays their respective merits on a par.

Both Telemann cantatas in this program originate from the *Harmonischer Gottesdienst*, a collection of 72 poetic church cantatas, spanning the whole liturgical calendar. All were written for one voice and a single *obbligato* instrument (often not specified) and *basso continuo* and were intended for both church and domestic performances. Most of the cantatas are set to texts by Matthäus Arnold Wilckens (1691–1745), a lawyer and pietistic poet.

Just as Bach, Telemann was strongly attracted to this kind of poetry, as it embodied a reaction against intellectualism and formalistic theology. By emphasizing personal religious experiences and devotional practices instead, it ideally complemented both composers' perceptions of music as a medium of dramatic and affective expression.

Contrary to catholic church music that would represent formal, untouchable and hence almost impersonal church doctrines, pietistic protestant music per definition requires a composer's personal devotional approach. Herein lie both its strength (if the expression comes over as credible) and its weakness (if it comes over as convoluted). In the case of most vocal works by Bach and Telemann the result is somewhat ambivalent as the literary qualities rarely match the musical ones. Today's listeners arguably simply tolerate the texts by indulging in the music. However, considering that the very music with its compelling expressiveness would not have come into existence without the tortuously labyrinthine texts, one should in fact marvel at its interpretive achievement of producing enduring exegeses of sources that would otherwise have faded into oblivion.

This certainly also applies to *Non sa che sia dolore*, a secular farewell cantata, allegedly written for Bach's pupil Lorenz Christoph Mizler on his departure from Leipzig to return to his native Ansbach. The quasi-philosophical text is a bungle of elegant, yet garbled Italian and proves to be a randomly assembled patchwork of quotes from unrelated libretti by Guarini and Metastasio. These findings even throw some doubt on Bach's authorship, for which there is no actual proof, except for the work's contrapuntal density, harmonic richness and overall charm, for which there are no precedents in the work of any other known composer of the time. Perhaps it was meant as a deliberately ironic jest, considering that Mizler's parting was no tragic event, but nothing more than a student's relocation to further his studies elsewhere.

Telemann's Double Concerto in E minor, for recorder and transverse flute, is the only concerto for this combination. Though written in a minor key, it's an exuberant work. The first movement sees the two instruments almost permanently locked in homophonic figures of thirds, leading to an imitative movement in a dramatic Italian style *allegro*. The third movement, *Largo*, suddenly reverts to E-major, presenting a cantabile melody strongly reminiscent of Händel's aria *Where'er you walk* from *Semele*. The final movement shows Telemann's prevailing love of Polish folk music. As a Hanaque in rondo form it quotes a Polish folk song and it presents virtuoso passagework and lightning-fast repartees over sustained bass drones. If the unison passage with which the movement begins and ends indicates a draw between the otherwise highly competitive soloists, the work as a whole is a clear win for every one involved.

Antoinette Blyth, Hans Huyssen

Seele, lerne dich erkennen

Arie

Seele, lerne dich erkennen!
lauter Stückwerk ist zu nennen,
was der Menschen Witz vermag.
Zur Vollkommenheit zu dringen
sind der ird'schen Klugheit Schwingen
viel zu schwach, viel zu schwach.

Rezitativ

Ein Vögelchen, dem noch die Glieder
zu zart und weich,
erhebt umsonst sein zitterndes Gefieder,
den Alten gleich,
den höhern Kreis der Lüfte zu zertheilen,
obgleich der Wille da,
denselben nachzueilen:
Nicht anders gehts allhier
mit unserm Witz und Wissen:
Die nimmer ruhende Begier
ist nach dem Höhern stets beflissen;
der angebor'ne Stolz
will auch die schwersten Sachen
sich federleicht, ja, was unmöglich fällt,
sich möglich machen.
Da unserm Witz, wie unserm Leben,
von Gott doch hier ein Ziel gestellt,
das nicht zu überstreben.
Es kennt die Welt nur einen Salomon,
den Gott, um dessen Thron
die höchste Weisheit strahl't,
den Weisesten genennet,
der doch sein Schwachseyn selbst bekennet.
Ach ja, in dieser Zeit
steigt das Erkenntnis nicht zu seiner Völligkeit.
Gott lässt uns durch das Sterben,
das uns zu nichts zu machen scheint,
erst alles erben;
was dunkel war, wird dann ein heller Schein;
was Stückwerk hieß, wird ganz;
was kindisch, männlich sein.

Arie

So will ich dich mit Freuden küssen,
du Herold der Vollkommenheit!
Du zeigst uns Gott in seinem Lichte,
von Angesicht zu Angesichte,
und bringst uns ein vollkomm'nes Wissen,
bey so vollkomm'ner Seligkeit.

Recitativo

Non sa che sia dolore
Chi dall' amico suo parte e non more.
Il fanciullin' che plora e geme
Ed allor che più ei teme,
Vien la madre a consolar.
Va dunque a cenni del cielo,
Adempi or di Minerva il zelo.

Aria

Learn to know yourself, oh soul!
mere fragments are all
that man's genius can achieve.
The wings of earthly wisdom
are too feeble, far too feeble
to attain perfection.

Recitative

A fledgling whose limbs are still
too weak and tender
will flap his trembling feathers in vain
when trying to emulate his elders
and the loftier realms of air,
even though the will is there
to follow them:
it is no different
with our wit and knowledge:
our restless desire
is always fixed on higher things;
our innate pride
strives to make even the most difficult tasks
light as a feather,
and make the impossible possible.
But God has set limits
to our wit, as to our life,
which cannot be exceeded.
The world has known only one Solomon,
whom God, whose throne
is illuminated by the ultimate wisdom,
called 'the wisest'.
Yet even Solomon acknowledged his weakness.
Ah yes, in this life
our perception remains imperfect.
It is only through Death,
which seems to reduce us to nothing,
that God allows us at last to inherit all;
what was dark will then be a bright light;
what was a fragment will then be whole;
what was childish will then be mature.

Aria

Thus will I kiss you joyfully,
oh Herald of perfection!
You bring us face to face
with God in his glory
and give us perfect knowledge
and perfect happiness withal.

Non sa che sia dolore

Recitative

He does not know what sorrow is
who parts from his friend and does not die.
The little child pleads and moans,
and indeed, the more fearful he is,
his mother comes to console him.
Therefore, go and seek a sign from heaven,
that you will now fulfil Minerva's purpose.

Aria

Parti pur e con dolore
 Lasci a noi dolente il cuore.
 La patria goderai,
 A dover la servirai;
 Varchi or di sponda in sponda,
 Propizi vedi il vento e l'onda.

Recitativo

Tuo saver al tempo e l'età constrasta,
 Virtù e valor solo a vincer basta;
 Ma chi gran ti farà più che non fusti
 Ansbaca, piena di tanti Augusti.

Aria

Ricetti gramezza e pavento,
 Qual nocchier, placato il vento
 Più non teme o si scolora,
 Ma contento in su la prora
 Va cantando in faccia al mar.

Aria

Go then, and with grief
 leave to us our sorrowful hearts.
 You will delight your nation,
 As you will serve it with duty;
 Set sail now from shore to shore,
 you will find the winds and waves favourable.

Recitative

Your knowledge contrasts with your age and years,
 your virtue and bravery suffice for victory.
 And you will become greater still,
 Ansbach, favored by the august.

Aria

Do away with grief and fear,
 Like the sailor, in quiet winds,
 who no longer is fearful or pale,
 but, content upon his prowess,
 goes on singing in the face of the sea.

Hemmet den Eifer, verbannet die Rache

Arie

Hemmet den Eifer, verbannet die Rache,
 dämpfet alle Bitterkeit.
 Laßt euch von der Liebe führen;
 denn an dieser wird man spüren,
 daß ihr Christi Jünger seid.

Rezitativ

Was heißt, du sollst nicht ehebrechen,
 nicht töten, nichts entwenden,
 nicht falsches Zeugnis sprechen,
 du sollst dich nichts gelüsten lassen
 und so noch etwas mehr,
 das im Gesetz geschrieben?
 Wird dieses Wort nicht alles in sich fassen:
 Du sollst den Nächsten so,
 als wie dich selber, lieben?
 Schau hier den Baum, an dem sich,
 gleich den Zweigen, die Tugenden vereinigt zeigen;
 denn keine Tugend ist,
 die nicht aus ihm entsproßet.
 Ach, grünert dieser Stamm,
 der aus des Glaubens Wurzel schießet,
 im Garten deines Lebens nicht, so gläube,
 daß es dir am Glauben selbst gebricht.

Arie

Ja, ja, ich will den Nächsten lieben,
 weil Gott mir diese Richtschnur gibt.
 Durch Liebe kann ein Mensch auf Erden bereits
 dem Himmel ähnlich werden,
 der sie an uns vollkommen übt.

Aria

Restrain the zeal, banish revenge,
 calm all bitterness.
 Let yourselves be guided by love;
 because by that everyone will know,
 that you are disciples of Christ.

Recitative

What does it mean, thou shalt not commit adultery, not
 kill, not steal,
 not bear false witness,
 not crave anything
 nor in similar ways
 transgress against the law?
 Is this not summarised by:
 Thou shalt love thy neighbour
 as thyself?
 Consider a tree where the branches
 are united like all virtues;
 because there is no virtue
 that does not stem from it.
 Oh, should this stem,
 rooted in faith,
 not grow in the garden of your life, then know
 that you lack faith itself.

Aria

Yes, yes, I want to love my neighbour,
 for God gives me this guideline.
 Through love, a person still on earth
 may begin to resemble his heavenly guise,
 fully immersed in love.

Upcoming Performance

St Martini Christmas Concert

Sunday 16 December, 16h St Martini Church, Long Street 240

The extended *Cape Consort* of voices & period instruments with the *St Martini Choir* & guest singers
 perform works by Praetorius, Gabrieli & Schütz