

*tapestries of music*

# Sundays with Coleman

II6th Season

2019-2020

*Presented in cooperation with the Caltech Committee on Institute Programs*



**CONCERTO ITALIANO**  
**RINALDO ALESSANDRINI, *Conductor***  
**JANUARY 12, 2020**



Sunday, January 12, 2020

3:30 pm

Beckman Auditorium, Caltech

*Coleman Chamber Music Association presents*

## **Concerto Italiano**

***conducted by Rinaldo Alessandrini***

Sonia Tedla, *soprano*

Gabriele Cassone, *trumpet*

Boris Begelman, *violin*

Andrea Rognoni, *violin*

Ludovico Minasi, *cello*

Rinaldo Alessandrini, *harpsichord*

**Arcangelo Corelli**

*(1653-1713)*

**Sonata a quattro for Trumpet, 2 Violins,  
and Basso Continuo, WoO4**

*Allegro*

*Grave*

*Spiritoso*

*Allegro*

*Adagio*

**Antonio Vivaldi**

*(1678-1741)*

**Sonata for 2 Violins and Basso Continuo  
in C Major, RV 60**

*Allegro*

*Adagio*

*Allegro*

*Adagio*

**Alessandro Marcello**

*(1673-1747)*

**Aria per Farinello - Cantata "Ecco l'aurora"  
for Soprano, 2 Violins, and Basso Continuo**

**Arcangelo Corelli**

**Triosonata terza for 2 Violins and  
Basso Continuo, Op. 1**

*Grave*

*Allegro*

*Adagio*

*Allegro*

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**George Friedrich Handel**  
(1685-1759)

**“Tu fedel?, tu costante?” Cantata for Soprano,  
2 Violins, and Basso Continuo, HWV 171**

*Sonata*

*Recitativo*

*Aria. Un poco allegro*

*Recitativo*

*Aria*

*Recitativo*

*Aria*

*Recitativo*

*Aria*

I N T E R M I S S I O N

**Leonardo Leo**  
(1694-1744)

**Cantata: “Splende più dell’usato,”  
for Soprano, 2 Violins, and Continuo**

*Introduzione*

*Recitativo*

*Aria. Larghetto*

*Recitativo*

*Aria. Spiritoso*

**Niccolò Porpora**  
(1686-1768)

**Sonata for 2 Violins and Basso Continuo  
in E minor**

*Affettuoso*

*Allegro*

*Adagio*

*Giga. Allegro*

**Alessandro Scarlatti**  
(1660-1725)

**Cantata: “Su le sponde del Tebro,” for Soprano,  
Trumpet, 2 Violins, and Basso Continuo**

*Sinfonia. Grave*

*Recitativo*

*Ritornello. Aria*

*Recitativo*

*Aria. Largo*

*Aria*

*Recitativo*

*Aria*

# Program Notes

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## **ARCANGELO CORELLI (1653-1713)** **Sonata a Quattro for Trumpet,** **2 Violins, and Basso Continuo, WoO 4**

We know little about Corelli's early life. He appears to have studied with important teachers in Italy and to have traveled in Germany and perhaps in France, too. An important violinist, composer, and friend of painters, he settled in Rome sometime before 1685, the year in which Bach and Handel were born. Corelli was also a conductor of note, and in April 1706, was admitted, together with Pasquini and Alessandro Scarlatti, to the Accademia dei'Arcadia.

His compositional output was small by the standards of the time, 60 sonatas of various kinds as well as 12 concertos, but his works were published and widely circulated. Corelli established himself as one of the most celebrated and influential composers in Europe, although he was reported to have lived simply and modestly. The fame of his art was such that royal visitors to Rome, like the Queen of Sweden and the King of Naples, sought him out. He was buried in the Roman Pantheon near the tomb of Raphael, and his patron, Cardinal Ottoboni, erected a marble monument at his grave.

Some of Corelli's sonatas have been described as *sonate da chiesa* (church sonatas), even though Corelli did not use this term himself; Corelli referred to them as *Sonate a trè*. They were not referred to as *sonate da chiesa* until the late 19th century when Joachim and Chrysander appended those subtitles in their edition of Corelli's work. Most of Corelli's *da chiesa* sonatas use a four-movement slow-fast-slow-fast alternation which was then unusual although it had become standard by the 18th century; Corelli has been credited with establishing this alternating layout of movements.

The Sonata a Quattro for Trumpet, 2 Violins, and Basso Continuo, WoO4, has five movements, with four of the movements, (*Adagio/Allegro/Grave/Spiritoso/Allegro*), following the alternating slow-

fast tempi format. The composer has expanded the usual four-movement sonata by adding an extra quick movement, a martial one for the trumpet and continuo, before the final *Allegro*. Corelli did not provide particularly idiomatic parts for the trumpet or the strings, though Matthias Hengelbrock suggests that the writing resembles that of the period's English music for trumpet. Corelli must have composed the work before 1704, the date when John Walsh printed it in London.

## **ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678-1741)** **Trio Sonata for 2 Violins and Basso** **Continuo in C Major, RV 60**

Vivaldi was a violinist in the orchestra of Saint Mark's in Venice, as well as a priest. From 1704 to 1740, he was employed as a composer, teacher, and violinist at a home for orphan girls in Venice, the Ospedale della Pietà. In that post, he was required to compose a minimum of two new concertos each month for the girls. At that time, music was the only suitable subject females could study, and the Ospedale della Pietà became so famous for the vocal and instrumental virtuosity of its girl students that the Sunday concerts at which they performed, modestly hidden behind screens, attracted listeners reputedly from the world over. Although the Pietà originated as both a home and a school for orphan girls, its educational excellence, especially in the field of music, became so renowned that wealthy citizens sent their daughters there to be educated. Over time, Vivaldi wrote about 500 concertos for the girls there in almost every imaginable combination of instruments.

Sonata RV 60 has an experimental air. In all four movements, the two violins are entirely equal. The initial *Allegro* features virtuoso passage-work for the violins, which play scalar passages, triadic arpeggios, and bariolage passages, while the basso continuo plays steady long sustained notes.

In the *Adagio*, the two unison violins play an emotionally rich melody and show their ability to play well in unison, something that may seem to be

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easy but actually was “the most difficult thing of all,” Johannes Pramsohler commented, “and in a ‘limping’ rhythm to boot!”

The fugal third movement, also *Allegro*, features quick embellishments and double stops in both violin parts, but ends up with a return to the qualities of the first movement. The final movement, *Adagio*, again demonstrates the violins playing somewhat formulaic passagework. Overall, in this work, the dual violinists are displayed together in a compendium of violin techniques; Vivaldi probably composed the work for his advanced pupils, who would have used it to hone their skills.

This sonata is extant only in one copy found in Count Schönborn’s Music Library in Wiesentheid, but the name of the composer is not easily discernible on it. Doubts have quite often surfaced about Vivaldi’s authorship.

### **ALESSANDRO MARCELLO (1673-1747)**

#### **Aria per Farinello - Cantata “Ecco l’aurora” for Soprano, 2 Violins, and Basso Continuo**

Alessandro Marcello was an Italian nobleman, poet, philosopher, mathematician, and musician. Since his father was against his becoming a music professional, he pursued a legal career instead. He was educated at the Collegio di S. Antonio, then joined the Venetian Arcadian society, the Accademia degli Animosi in 1698, and served the city as a diplomat in the Levant and the Peloponnese in 1700 and 1701. After returning to Venice in 1706, he was elected to the Grand Council of the Republic, and also held other prominent positions in government, serving as an advocate and as a magistrate; both his professional career and social activities were befitting his status as a member of Venice’s nobility.

He was responsible for paintings found in the family palaces and parish church and, after joining the literary society, the Accademia della Crusca, published eight books of the Accademia degli Animosi and did much to expand its collection of musical instruments, many of which are extant in Rome’s National Museum of Musical Instruments.

His musical compositional output is small; he only composed about a dozen each of chamber cantatas, violin sonatas, and concertos, and published his music under the pseudonym Eterio Stinfalico. As he was a nobleman, Marcello played and wrote music for pleasure alone.

His cantatas dealt primarily with pastoral subjects and were clearly intended for Venice and Rome’s best singers. The aria from the cantata, “Ecco l’aurora che luminosa sorge” for Soprano, 2 Violins and Basso Continuo, was presumably written for the famous castrato Signor Carlo Broschi detto Farinelli (1705-1782). The attribution reads ‘Alessandro Marcello Musica e Poesia,’ which means that Marcello wrote both the words and the music for this selection. Farinelli did not make his debut until 1720 (in Porpora’s *Angelica e medoro*), which helps date when this piece may have been written.

### **ARCANGELO CORELLI (1653-1713)**

#### **Trio Sonata for 2 Violins and Basso Continuo, Op. 1, No. 3**

In the Baroque era, the most popular chamber music ensemble medium was the trio sonata, which could be played by various combinations of up to four instruments. This one appears to be the seventh in a collection that was first published in 1694 in Rome, although it was probably composed much earlier.

It was what was then called a *sonata da camera* (“chamber sonata,”) identified as different from *sonate da chiesa* because this kind of sonata often included dance-based music which would have been too “frivolous” for performance in church.

### **GEORGE FRIEDRICH HANDEL (1685-1759)**

#### **“Tu fedel? tu costante?” Cantata for Soprano, 2 Violins, and Basso Continuo, HWV 171**

The composition of cantatas for solo voice was one of Handel’s chief occupations during the four years he

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spent in Italy. He composed them for the delectation of his noble patrons; the cantatas were often performed at the musical evenings held in the great palaces of the Italian cities he visited. The texts, written in a highly poetic language characterized by exaggerated figures of speech and much personification, drew from the young composer some of the most obviously dramatic music of his career.

The theme of “Tu fedel? Tu costante?” (Are you faithful; are you constant?) resonates throughout cultures which adhere to monogamy. In this cantata the singer, an injured lover, berates her beloved, Fileno, for his philandering ways. He loves a hundred beauties and wishes to share his heart with them all, leaving the singer feeling used, humiliated, and outraged. In the last aria, she defiantly decides, optimistically, either to love another or live entirely without love.

### **LEONARDO LEO (1694-1744)**

#### **“Splende più dell’usato,” Cantata for Soprano, 2 Violins, and Continuo**

Leonardo Leo, highly thought of during his life as the heir apparent to the great cantata composer Alessandro Scarlatti, was among the last major figures to emerge in the Italian Baroque. In 1712, he was acclaimed when his sacred cantata “Chiara, o L’infideltà abbattuta” was performed at the Royal Palace in Naples. When Scarlatti died in 1725, Leo became principal organist to the Royal Chapel.

Leo is believed to have written or contributed to some 70 operas. His opera overtures are considered important stepping-stones in the early development of the symphony. All of these works are now obscure, and many are lost. Leo also composed at least 53 cantatas in two distinct genres. Secular cantatas, the larger group, contain 42 compositions, of which 19 featured soprano and basso continuo; eight were for soprano, two violins, and basso continuo; and six for soprano, two violins, viola, and continuo. The second group, sacred cantatas, containing 11 pieces, also focused on the soprano voice: three were for soprano

and basso continuo, and one was for soprano, two violins, and basso continuo.

The formal structure of many of Leo’s cantatas is quite similar. It includes an instrumental introduction followed by a succession of recitatives paired with arias. The arias are all *da capo*, in three-part form: ABA. In these arias, there was less attention to variety in form than there was concern for adapting the music to the expression of the text. Leo, while a master of contrapuntal movement, was highly sensitive to the poetic demands of the text, rendering the images with sensitivity to their visual properties and subtlety.

### **NICCOLÒ ANTONIO PORPORA (1686-1768)**

#### **Sonata for 2 Violins and Basso Continuo in E minor**

Porpora was famous primarily as an Italian opera composer and as a singing teacher. His first opera, *Agrippina*, was performed in the Neapolitan Royal Palace in 1708. Shortly thereafter, two more operas, *Flavio Anicio Olibrio* (1711) and *Basilio re d’oriente* (1713), bearing the name of his current patrons as their titles, were produced in Naples. In 1714 and 1718, he fulfilled an operatic commission from the Viennese court. During this same period, he became famous as a vocal teacher and a teacher of composition at the Conservatorio di S. Onofrio in Naples. One of his pupils was the most famous castrato of all time, Farinelli. Farinelli made his debut singing a serenata of Porpora’s, written to a libretto by a young poet, Pietro Metastasio, who became the century’s greatest librettist.

Porpora moved to London at the invitation of a group of noblemen who organized the Opera of the Nobility to compete with Handel’s opera company, the dominant opera company in London, but it never established a clear superiority over its rivals. Porpora returned to Venice in 1736; from 1747 until 1751, he lived in Dresden as the singing teacher to Princess Maria Antonia before moving to Vienna to give singing lessons and teaching composition to Haydn, who became his valet and also his keyboard

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accompanist. He returned to Naples in 1758. Overall, Porpora composed 48 operas, many solo cantatas and oratorios, some Masses, and a few instrumental works.

A follower of Alessandro Scarlatti, Porpora belonged to the Neapolitan School of composers, in which the singer became dominant. The Neapolitan musical fashion emphasized melody with simple homophonic accompaniments; at this time, vocal melodies became both more lyrical and contained more decorative ornament. Porpora wrote with specific singers in mind, using a refined style of expressive singing built on the basis of perfect vocal technique.

This sonata, a spirited and exciting work in four movements and one of his few instrumental pieces, probably dates from 1736, when Porpora was in England.

#### **ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI (1660-1725)**

#### **“Su le sponde del tebro,” Cantata for Soprano, Trumpet, 2 Violins, and Basso Continuo, H. 705**

In 1684, Scarlatti became maestro di cappella to the viceroy of Naples, through the influence of his sister, an opera singer, who was the mistress of an influential Neapolitan noble. In Naples, he composed many operas, remarkable chiefly for their fluency

and expressiveness in which the lyric beauty of the voice is the most important value. In 1702, he won the patronage of Ferdinando de' Medici, for whose private theatre near Florence he composed operas, and of Cardinal Ottoboni, who made him his maestro di cappella, and procured him a post at the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome in 1703. In 1708, he returned to Naples.

Scarlatti composed many cantatas, nearly 800, and many have no known date of composition. Members of the aristocracy commissioned them mostly to be performed at court or to entertain guests or for special occasions. Scarlatti's music forms an important link between the early Baroque Italian vocal styles of the 17th century, with their centers in Florence, Venice, and Rome, and the classical school of the 18th century, which culminated in Mozart.

“Su le sponde del tebro,” probably written between 1690 and 1695, gives voice to the laments of a rejected young maiden; it has a pastoral text with a subject of unrequited love. The protagonist, Aminto, narrates her love complaint in recitative and aria. Narration in the form of recitative opens the cantata; passages throughout several arias express the maiden's feelings lyrically, while contrasting with one another emotionally and musically. After a slow introductory orchestral Sinfonia, the first aria features a trumpet obbligato with the vocal part imitating the trumpet themes. In the last aria of the work, with triumphal themes, Aminto declares her resolve to endure and to let her heart love again..

# Concerto Italiano

Rinaldo Alessandrini - Artistic Director

Founder and conductor Rinaldo Alessandrini's early music ensemble Concerto Italiano came into existence in 1984. Its birth coincides with that of the revival of early music in Italy and is, in no small part, responsible for it. Monteverdi, Bach, and Vivaldi are the main composers which have inspired the group in honoring an appreciation of the language of Baroque music, making a new aesthetic and musical rhetoric available to a fresh audience.

In 2017 Concerto Italiano made its Carnegie Hall debut and toured China, Japan, Australia, and many European cities, performing Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers, *L'Orfeo*, and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Over the course of its history, the ensemble has appeared at major festivals and in venues throughout the European continent as well as Istanbul; Tel Aviv; Jerusalem; Buenos Aires (Teatro Colon); Rio de Janeiro (Teatro São Paulo); New York (Metropolitan Museum, Lincoln Center); Washington, D.C. (Library of Congress); and Tokyo.

Concerto Italiano has recently been involved in performing the complete Monteverdi opera cycle at La Scala (Milano) and Opera Garnier (Paris), in collaboration with stage director Robert Wilson. The group has also toured with RIAS Kammerchor in an ambitious program of Roman sacred music and Alessandro Scarlatti's oratorio *Caino*. It records regularly for the Naïve label. Recent releases include Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, a collection of sacred music by Alessandro Scarlatti, Monteverdi's complete 8th Book of Madrigals, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, and Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers and "Selva Morale e Spirituale." After several decades the recordings of Concerto Italiano are still considered by critics and public alike to be the definitive standards of the Baroque revival and style.

# Rinaldo Alessandrini,

*harpsichord and conductor*

The harpsichordist, organist, and pianist Rinaldo Alessandrini is one of the leading figures on the international early music scene. His predilection for the Italian repertory, and his preoccupation with the expressive characteristics specific to the Italian style of the 17th and 18th centuries, are the decisive factors that shape his musical approach and interpretative options, both as founder and director of Concerto Italiano, and as a soloist and guest conductor.

Among the notable productions he has conducted are Handel's *Theodora*, Alessandro Scarlatti's *La Vergine dei dolori*, Monteverdi's Vespers, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, and many works by Vivaldi, including *La Senna festeggiante*, *The Four Seasons*, the operas *L'Olimpiade* and *Armida*, and the monumental reconstruction of his Solemn Vespers for the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin.

A regular guest conductor with leading orchestras in Europe, the United States, Melbourne, and São Paulo, he also appears frequently at La Scala in Milan, the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, La Monnaie in Brussels, the Opéra de Liège and Welsh National Opera.

Rinaldo Alessandrini was resident conductor with the RIAS Kammerchor Berlin in the 2015/16 season. In 2016 he was appointed music director of the 'Purtimiro' Baroque opera festival at the Teatro Rossini in Lugo di Romagna.

In 2002, along with Concerto Italiano, he received the Premio Abbiati for his entire career up to that point. He was appointed Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2003, and is a member of the Accademia Filarmonica Romana.