

If you'd like to know how St Andrew's has come to host this premiere, read on ...

João is always researching new music. He discovered these two arias from Vivaldi's 'Bajazet' on Youtube.com, sung by Sara Mingardo and Marijana Mijanovic from a recording made by Opera Galante in Europe in 2001, and asked me to source the scores. Strangely the internet turned up nothing, so then I approached the libraries of UK conservatoires, music academies and colleges. And they could find no trace of the scores either. There was no record of 'Bajazet' having been performed anywhere in the UK. They were as surprised as I was! The search, only just started, had come to a grinding halt.

But it seems their curiosity had been as piqued as mine, as shortly afterwards Lesley Daniel from the Royal Academy of Music contacted me to say her research had led her to Vivaldi's original manuscript, lodged in the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria in Turin, and perhaps the Italians there could help me. At that point I was wondering how important it was for João to have this music! But hot on Lesley's heels came Sarah Batchelor, Assistant Librarian at the Royal College of Music who dropped me a line to say her enquiries had turned up that Pinchgut Opera in Sydney, Australia had performed 'Bajazet' in 2015, so they must be in possession of the score. Well, nothing ventured, nothing gained: without much expectation of success, I dropped them a line.

Pinchgut Opera, it turns out, is a specialist company bringing 17th and 18th century chamber opera to Sydneysiders, performing at the City Recital Hall. Their Artistic Director is Dr. Erin Helyard, a musicologist who, in his quest for little-known, rarely-performed opera, had picked up the fading scent of 'Bajazet' during a visit to America, and tracked it down to a library there which held microfiche of photographs, taken by an 'enterprising' musicologist before the Second World War, of the original manuscript in Turin! From there Dr Helyard had to patch up the score - some of the original manuscript having been in poor condition - to arrive at the finished article, and the performance for his Australian audience.

Well, by the time I'd got that far, I had to ask. Would they, for a consideration, allow me to have the score? Within 24 hours they were back. Yes, Dr Helyard would be more than happy for us to have it for our exclusive use as long as we recognised his copyright in any material. And 24 hours after that they had emailed me the entire score of 'Bajazet' annotated for all the voices and instruments! Yet more proof, if any were needed, of the many merits of our free-wheeling cousins down-under! So we are indebted to Dr Helyard, and to Pinchgut Opera for allowing us to perform these two arias for you, for the first time in the UK. And this is likely a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Our other commitment to Dr Helyard was that we would destroy the instrumental scores after these concerts. Which, of course, we will.

If you are as curious as I was about the derivation of Pinchgut Opera's extraordinary name, this from Wikipedia: Pinchgut Opera draws its unusual name from Fort Denison, a former penal site in the Sydney Harbour which was nicknamed "Pinchgut" by its inmates. The company chose the name "as we wanted something recognisably Sydney, easy to remember, and as a reminder of our tight budgets and humble beginnings".

JOÃO PAULO FERREIRA in concert with Guest Performers

Ella Sehringer - clarinet

Bethany Thomas - violin

Katie Ellwood - cello

accompanied by Claire Tester - piano

SAINT ANDREW'S CHURCH, SHRIVENHAM - SAINT ANDREW'S CELEBRATION

António Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

Cantata: Cessate, omai cessate (Andante and allegro only)

With thanks to Kevin Jacot for the arrangement of a piano accompaniment

This cantata takes us back to one of the popular themes of that time, an Arcadia where shepherds and shepherdesses pass the day in dappled groves. But in this song it has all gone horribly wrong, with the spurned shepherd angrily denouncing his erstwhile lover Dorilla as 'inhuman' and 'ungrateful' as he retreats into heart-broken solitude.

Aria: Gemo in un punto e fremo – *from the opera 'L'Olimpiade*

An Olympian tale of cheating. Licida, a prince of Crete, and his friend Megacles are in love with the same woman, Aristeia. Licida might be a prince but Megacles is an athlete, and he agrees to compete in the Games as Licida. The deception is discovered and, guess what? Aristeia won't have anything to do with either of them. Disgraced, Megacles drowns himself, and Licida, exiled and overcome with remorse, descends into madness. A cautionary tale if ever there was one!

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681 – 1767)

Katie plays Sonata in D – *from 'Der getreue Musikmeister' (1st and 2nd Movements lento, allegro)*

A contemporary of Bach, in his day Telemann's reputation exceeded that of his friend and fellow countryman. He was a prolific composer and an accomplished organist with over 700 works to his name. His works reflect a variety of influences, but most particularly those of the French composers. This work ...

António Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

Aria: Svena, uccidi, abbatti, attera – *from the opera 'Bajazet' – UK premiere*

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Against her father Bajazet's wishes, Asteria promises marriage to his arch-enemy Tamerlano. But love turns to hate when she later discovers that her father has died at Tamerlano's hand. This aria reflects both the grief she feels at the loss of her father and the violent hatred that she now holds for Tamerlano. It seems soap operas have quite a historic pedigree.

Aria: In si torbida procella – *from the opera 'Bajazet' – UK premiere*

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Looking at things from a different point of view, Tamerlano has earlier confided to Andronicus his love for Asteria. He wants Andronicus to approach Bajazet as a go-between and offers to reward him with the throne of Greece. But guess what? Andronicus loves Asteria too and isn't about to play ball. Tamerlano, used to getting his own way, asks why there is no friendly star looking down on him? why no safe port? why no calm shore? And finally he angrily declares that he will erupt from the rocks, he will repel the wind and the waves. In short, he's not going to let anything get in his way.

Johann Adolph Hasse (1699 – 1783)

Aria: Pallido il sole – *from the opera 'Artaserse'*

Artabano, who sings this aria, expresses his fear and remorse because his scheme to usurp Artaserse, the rightful heir to the Persian throne, has been exposed. There's nothing makes you feel sorer than being found out.

Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)

Bethany plays Concerto in G for Violin (1st Movement allegro moderato)

An Austrian of the Classical period, Haydn can take credit for the development of chamber music, earning himself epithets such as 'Father of the Symphony' and 'Father of the String Quartet'. For much of his career he was employed as a court musician to the Esterhazy family where, because of the remoteness of their estates, he found himself isolated from other composers and trends in composition. Far from feeling at a disadvantage, he felt he was 'forced to become original'. It certainly did him no harm: he was a friend and mentor to Mozart and taught Beethoven, and for much of his life was the most celebrated composer in Europe. This concerto was written in 1769 and was described as 'uniquely beautiful' although Haydn himself, with great modesty, said about it "I was no wizard on any instrument, but I knew the potentialities and effects of all. I was not a bad pianist and singer and was also able to play a violin concerto."

INTERVAL

Johann Adolph Hasse (1699 – 1783)

Aria: *Generoso risvegliati, o core – from the opera 'Cleofide'*

Poros, the Indian King, mistakenly believes his wife Cleofide has started an affair with his enemy, Alexander the Great. In this aria, and blaming her, he rages against the bonds of love, but then realises he is deceiving himself if he believes that freeing himself from such ties will bring him happiness. Nice, finally, to have a song about reconciliation.

Vicente Martín y Soler (1754 – 1806)

Canzonetta: *La Natura – from '12 Canzonette Italiane'*

Arranged for piano by Claire Tester

This collection of 12 songs written by Soler, has a libretto written by Lorenzo da Ponte, the same librettist that Mozart used for many of his operas. This short song takes a humorous look at love and seduction. Needless to say, boy gets girl!

Carl Maria von Weber (1786 – 1826)

Ella plays Concerto No 1 for Clarinet (1st Movement allegro)

The German Weber was a brilliant musician and composer and one of the first prominent composers of the Romantic movement. His works embrace all instruments of the time, and all genres of music from opera, through concert works to choral and religious compositions. Even folksongs and world music were embraced: he was the first Western composer to incorporate Chinese melodies into his work. This piece is considered a gem in the instrument's repertoire, and the 1st movement was very innovative for its time, with some stylistic aspects paving the way for later composers like Felix Mendelssohn. Weber died in London of tuberculosis when he was only 39 years old. It is testament to his extraordinary energy and talent that he left such a huge body of work behind him.

Federico García Lorca (1898 – 1936)

'Canciones Populares'

The poet Lorca spent a lot of his short life making a record of Spanish gypsy and traditional music. These are story-weaving or dancing songs. Think flying green skirts, jingling bells and sidelong glances!

Sevillanas del Siglo XVIII: is a paean to the loveliness of Seville: the smooth river, the vivacity of its different barrios and, of course, the beauty of its girls.

Los Reyes de la Baraja: the men in this lady's life are like the kings in a pack of cards. There's the King of Spades, of Clubs, of Diamonds and of Cups. 'Oliveiro gave me the push; I left Esparto; I miss Sarmiento; and Haberte I loved too much!'

Zorongo: the passionate lament of a young man being driven crazy by the fickle love of a gypsy.

Francis Poulenc (1899 – 1963)

Ella plays Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (2nd Movement Romanza)

Poulenc was a French composer and pianist. But that was not the career his parents had mapped out for him: they wanted him to join the family pharmacy business, and refused to allow him to enrol in music college. Largely self-educated he had to wait for his parents to die before he could start serious study with pianist, and subsequent mentor, Ricardo Viñes, and he soon came under the influence of Erik Satie, joining the group of young composers known as Les Six. In his early career he had a reputation for high spirits and

irreverence, but maturity allowed the development of a more serious side and a number of religious compositions resulted. This sonata was written in 1962 and was one of his last compositions, dedicated to his friend Artur Honneger who, like Poulenc, had belonged to the group Les Six.

Traditional Brazilian song

Casinha Pequena

Arranged for piano by Claire Tester

A man looks back fondly to the tiny house beside a coconut palm, where love flourished and was sealed with lingering kisses. What happened to that fervour? How did those vows of eternal love give way to lies and recriminations. All that is left is regret; a smile that can never be recaptured, and a life that is only tears.

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873– 1943)

Katie plays Vocalise from 'Fourteen Songs', Op. 34 no. 14, arranged for Cello and Piano

Russian composer and pianist Rachmaninov decamped to the USA in 1917 where he lived until his death. One of the last of the great romantic composers he is best known for his symphonies and piano concertos, and for his Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, still a popular favourite today. This gorgeous and moving piece, composed in 1915, was originally written for voice with piano accompaniment but, because it had no words, it easily lent itself to other instruments, and this cello arrangement comes to you courtesy of the British cellist, Raphael Wallfisch.

Waldemar Henrique (1905 – 1995)

Canção: Uirapuru – *from his collection 'Cancões Amazônicas'*

Henrique was the son of a Portuguese father and a mother of indigenous Brazilian descent. From his early youth he was fascinated by the traditional culture and folklore of Amazonia, a fascination that was to form a central theme in many of his songs and compositions. This is a flirtatious song, likening the capture of the Uirapuru – a small, colourful bird with a lovely song - to the capture of a young lady's affections.

Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990)

Bethany plays the 'Hoe-down' from the ballet 'Rodeo'

Copland was commissioned to write this ballet by the choreographer Agnes de Mille for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo when they moved to the United States during World War II. Copland incorporates a number of American folk melodies into the score which builds to a climax when Roper kisses Cowgirl and the dance ends in a triumphant fanfare.

Gerónimo Gimenez (1854 – 1923)

Canción: La Tarántula - *from the zarzuela 'La Tempranica'*

Gimenez dedicated his career to writing 'zarzuelas' – Spanish musical comedies. La Tempranica was first performed at the Teatro dela Zarzuela in Madrid in 1900. La Tarantula is a cheeky song about the cunning way a tarantula can creep up unseen and give you a nasty bite: a not-very-hidden warning about the potential dangers of falling in love. 'Tempranica' means headstrong, and this story is of a country girl's determination to get to grips with the vagaries of city life for good or ill.

PERFORMERS' CURRICULA VITAE

João Paulo Ferreira

Brazilian counter-tenor João Paulo Ferreira cannot remember a time when he was not singing, painting, acting or dancing! By the time he was sixteen he was already singing professionally with Gaiamálgame (which translates as 'together on Earth'), a multi-ethnic group based in his home city of Garanhuns.

From there he moved to Aracaju, capital of Sergipe State to take up a place with the Symphony Chorus of the Orquestra Sinfônica de Sergipe from where he was given the opportunity to study under maestro Neyde Thomas, later taking a role in Puccini's Gianni Schicchi under the baton of Walter Neiva.

2013 marked the start of his international career, when he joined the Nido Delas Artes International Opera Tour, taking in Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica and Columbia and where he was introduced to the eclectic repertoire he continues to develop to this day.

Since arriving in Portugal in 2015 to team up with Luís Peças in the classical singing duo 'enCanto', João has sung in venues the length and breadth of the country, as well as being the 'house singer' for the Santa Maria Monastery, a World Heritage Site in his home town Alcobaça, a role which he juggles with his international commitments, most notably in France and the United Kingdom.

João Paulo will be accompanied by Claire Tester.

Claire Tester

Claire studied organ and piano at university, following which she embarked on a long and varied career in music education. Latterly Claire has been able to indulge her primary passion of accompanying, and she is currently Resident Accompanist at The Sixth Form College, Farnborough, one of the largest and most successful music departments in the country. Alongside this, she is greatly in demand as piano accompanist for soloists in concert, as well as choral groups and theatre companies, and for master-classes and recitals throughout the UK and British Isles. In the last year Claire has performed in St Mark's Venice, has been accompanist for master-classes given by musicians such as Julian Lloyd-Webber, and performed with tenor Adrian Dwyer on BBC Radio 3, in addition to undertaking short concert tours in Italy, Germany and Poland.

In 2010, Claire co-organised the UK debut tour for the Portuguese counter-tenor, Luís Peças, and was Luís's accompanist for his performances at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, and St Thomas-on-the-Bourne, Farnham when he visited the UK in November 2012. Since then she has accompanied Luís and João in St Paul's Covent Garden, Our Lady of the Assumption and St Gregory near Regent Street, St John's at Buxton, and travelled on several occasions to Portugal to accompany Luís in concert in the World Heritage Monastery church of Santa Maria, Alcobaça and, more recently, Luís and João at the Sanctuary church of Nossa Senhora da Nazaré and again, this September, in the Monastery church of Santa Maria.

Ella Sehringer

After starting the violin at a young age, and piano shortly after, Ella was already a competent musician before deciding, at the age of 10, that the clarinet was her true calling. Since then she has taken part in a host of ensembles and orchestras and has been on tour to Italy, Amsterdam and Austria with her secondary school and Berkshire Maestros. More recently she has become principal clarinettist in Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra and has also been offered a place to study at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama next year.

Bethany Thomas

I am a year 13 student at Farnborough Sixth Form College studying Music, English Literature and Maths. I started playing violin at the age of 7 and my love of music developed through playing the piano, participating in choirs and being surrounded by a family who value music very highly. I co-lead the Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra and I have a particular love for chamber music - a passion my music scholarship at Farnborough has helped nurture. I am very excited to study music at university next year and to keep learning and performing through this incredible art.

Katie Ellwood

Katie has studied the cello since she was 6 years old, and is currently a Music Scholar at Farnborough 6th Form College. She is a Principal member of the Berkshire County Youth Orchestra and the Corelli Orchestra. Katie also studies singing, and particularly enjoys composing and singing her own songs. She is hoping to go to Music Conservatoire next year to study composition.