



Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741): *Gloria e Imeneo* (RV 687)



Giovanni Antonio Canal ("Canaletto") (1697-1768): *Réception de l'ambassadeur français à Venise*
(Saint-Petersbourg, Musée de l'Ermitage)

In the 1720s **Antonio VIVALDI** – then already one of the most renowned Italian composers — composed three *Serenate* in honor of the French monarchy. One is set for mezzo-soprano, alto, and string orchestra and is now known as *Gloria e Imeneo*. However, neither the correct title of the composition, nor the original introductory *Sinfonia* are known, because the first pages of the manuscript are missing. On the other hand, we do know that *Gloria e Imeneo* was commissioned for the wedding of Louis XV and the Polish princess Maria Leszczynska, and that it was performed in the gardens of the French Embassy in Venice on the evening of 12 September 1725. As it is the case for most *Serenate*, the text does not present any particular plot. The two protagonists, Hymen (Imeneo), the god of Marriage, and Gloria, the personification of eternal glory, only compete with each other in celebrating the radiant (and henceforth

also ensured) future of the French monarchy, and in congratulating the young royal couple in most flowery language.

The exceptionally high quality of the music largely compensates for the libretto's obvious lack of dramatic substance. *Gloria e Imeneo* is an example of some of Vivaldi's best music: in the arias the composer alternates virtuosity with elegance, poignancy, and dramatic fervor in a way similar to what he did in his most compelling operas. Some arias even have tune-like qualities, comparable to the most unforgettable of his concerto melodies. On the other hand, recitatives are short and lively and they never distract from what was most important to Vivaldi and his French sponsors: a solid hour of ravishing and exciting Baroque music.

Programme

Antonio VIVALDI (1678-1741): *Gloria e Imeneo* (Venetia 1725)

65 minutes, without intermission.

However, the composition can be divided into two sections, and the program can be complemented with instrumental pieces by Vivaldi to make it a concert in two parts.

Ensemble (17)

Les Muffatti under the direction of Peter Van Heyghen

Soloists: Isabelle Everarts de Velp (mezzo-soprano)
Gabriella Martellacci (alto)

Orchestra: 7 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, double bass
harpsichord, archlute



Contact

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