



Water Musics

Georg Friedrich Händel – Antonio Vivaldi – Georg Philipp Telemann



Giovanni Antonio Canal ("Canaletto") (1697-1768): *The Thames and the City of London* (c. 1746)
(Národní Galerie, Praha)

This programme unites the three single most innovative and productive composers of the early 18th century. **George Frederick HANDEL** (1685-1759), **Antonio VIVALDI** (1678-1741) and **Georg Philipp TELEMANN** (1681-1767) were active in the cities of London, Venice and Hamburg respectively. These three cities were at that time not only leading cultural and musical centres, but also major maritime economic powers. It is no surprise therefore that at some point in their careers all three composers chose the element of water as a source of inspiration for a musical composition. What is most fascinating, however, is the difference between their respective approaches, and it is precisely this difference that results in such a diversified, brisk and effervescent concert programme.

Georg Philipp TELEMANN's suite *Hamburger Ebb' und Flut*, composed in 1723 for the centennial of the Hamburg Admiralty, is the most programmatic work on the menu. Its central part consists of seven dance movements in which Telemann skilfully depicts a series of mythological sea creatures in different moods. This core section is preceded and introduced by an overture in which Telemann, with a sense for reality equalled only in 19th century romantic symphonic poems such as Bedřich Smetana's *Moldau*, masterfully paints the calm, savageness and changing tides of the North Sea. The suite concludes in a light, playful mood with a reference to folk life in the port city of Hamburg.

In the works of **Antonio VIVALDI**, water is a recurrent theme. It is worth mentioning in this respect, the raindrops in the famous second movement of 'The Winter' or the two versions of his concerto *La tempesta di mare*. In two motets, *In turbato mare irato* and *Sum in medio tempestatum*, both composed around 1730, Vivaldi reverts to a traditional 'nature introduction' (Natureingang) within Christianity, by which the helplessness of the human soul is compared to a little boat fallen prey to the waves in the rough seas. That same tradition is faithfully observed in the subsequent invocation to the Blessed Virgin, here in her capacity of *Stella Maris*, beacon and infallible guide for all humanity in its perennial quest for peace of mind.

The most famous of all Baroque 'water musics' is undoubtedly that of **George Frederick HANDEL** and it is all the more remarkable that water itself is actually not even the theme in these three brilliant orchestral suites. The fact that Handel's *Water Music* carries that name is merely due to the fact that it was originally performed on water, more specifically on the River Thames during a royal boat trip from Whitehall to Chelsea on July 17th, 1717. It is no doubt the amazingly rich variety and alternation between moods, underscored by the extremely colourful instrumentation of strings, enriched with melodious oboes, extrovert horns, sweet flutes, a slender soprano recorder and triumphant trumpets that have granted this work the status of a true musical evergreen ever since.

Programme

This programme is offered in two formats:

1. Full evening programme with interval

G. F. HANDEL (1685-1759): *Water Music*, suites in F and D major (HWV 348-9)

A. VIVALDI (1678-1741): *In turbato mare irato*, motet in G major (RV 627)

G. P. TELEMANN (1681-1767): *Hamburger Ebb' und Flut*, suite in C major (TWV 55:C3)

2. Short programme (ca. 1 hour) without interval

G. F. HANDEL (1685-1759): *Water Music* (HWV 348-350)

Ensemble (27)

Les Muffatti under the direction of Peter Van Heyghen

Soloist: Albane Carrère (mezzo-soprano)

Orchestra: 7 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, double bass
2 trumpets, 2 horns
2 recorders, 2 transverse flutes, 2 oboes, bassoon
harpichord, archlute



Contact

Les Muffatti: info@lesmuffatti.be, www.lesmuffatti.be

Peter Van Heyghen (Artistic Director): peter@lesmuffatti.be, +32 498 11 39 35

Vicki Stoten (Artist Representative): vicki@vgsconnect.com, +49 7731 95 58 07