

Saturday Evening, December 1, 2018, at 7:30

The Juilliard School

presents

Juilliard415

Paul Agnew, *Conductor*

Anneliese Klenetsky, *Soprano*

Mer Wohlgemuth, *Soprano*

Siman Chung, *Countertenor*

Handel in Rome II

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759) ***Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*, HWV 96**

ANNELIESE KLENETSKY, *Clori*

MER WOHLGEMUTH, *Tirsi*

SIMAN CHUNG, *Fileno*

Approximate running time: 1 hour and 40 minutes, including an intermission

Juilliard's full-scholarship Historical Performance program was established and endowed in 2009 by the generous support of Bruce and Suzie Kovner.

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not permitted in this auditorium.

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Alice Tully Hall

*Please make certain that all electronic devices
are turned off during the performance.*

Handel's School for Lovers

by Thomas May

Italy has served as a place of artistic (re)awakening for countless artists, at every stage of their lives. "All the dreams of my youth have come to life," wrote Goethe of his first impressions of Rome, 80 years after George Frideric Handel made the trip south of the Alps. Goethe, already an internationally famous writer, spent two years traveling in Italy, where he gained experiences that profoundly affected his work. Handel was still in the process of launching his composing career and stayed even longer (between 1706 and 1710—the exact chronology of these years is riddled with uncertainties and possibly included some return visits to Germany).

With sojourns in Florence, Rome, Naples, and Venice, young Handel assimilated not only practical knowledge invaluable for his craft but elements of Italian style—from composers and performers alike—that enriched his style going forward. "Italian experience polished and refined the roughness of his native idiom without sapping its strength," Winton Dean and John Merrill Knapp wrote. "Indeed, the new lyrical freedom and flexibility notably increased it."

Dating from 1707, during Handel's stay in Rome, *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*, HWV 96, offers a scintillating snapshot of how the 22-year-old composer was being shaped during his Italian adventure. The context for his hyper-prolific creativity in this period shows the ambitious young man's resourcefulness in attracting powerful patrons to sponsor him. Despite his own convictions as a Lutheran, Giorgio Federico Hendel (as he restyled his name) received commissions from wealthy Roman Catholic cardinals who were leading arts patrons: Benedetto Pamphilli, Carlo Colonna, and

Pietro Ottoboni. His psalm setting *Dixit Dominus*, for example, one of Handel's best-known scores from his time in Rome, was part of a larger Vespers project probably sponsored by Cardinal Colonna.

Along with these princes of the church, Handel found backing from the secular aristocracy in the person of the Marquis Francesco Maria Ruspoli (1672–1731), among the wealthiest men in Rome, and later a prince. Ruspoli hosted the composer at his Roman home, Bonelli Palace, as well as at his country estate northwest of the city at Vignanello. Handel seems to have spent at least two separate periods in his service, the first of which culminated in *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* in fall 1707. It's interesting to note that his commissions from the cardinals included both sacred and secular works, while for the 1708 Easter celebrations at Ruspoli's palace he also wrote *La resurrezione*, his second oratorio, which was lavishly staged.

Clori, Tirsi e Fileno belongs to a series of cantatas that Handel produced for the Accademia dell'Arcadia, of which Ruspoli was a prominent sponsoring member and which held meetings and symposia at his palace. The Handel scholar Anthony Hicks describes some of these gatherings as occasions "in which a poet, a composer, and a singer could be challenged to write, set, and perform a new cantata in the course of an evening." Goethe himself recounted being admitted into this "Arcadian Academy" during his Italian journey, a century after its founding: "It had often changed its places of meeting and its artistic ideals, but it still maintained its outward form with great respectability if not with an equal prestige."

The Arcadian society was still young when Handel composed his weekly cantatas—many of the 60 or so extant cantatas for voice and continuo alone from this period are believed to have been produced for

this purpose—and reflected, on the literary level, a desire to pare away the overgrown, over-ornamented complexity and artificiality of Italian poetry from the Baroque. The new ideal was modeled on the pastoral poetry of classical antiquity, above all as represented by the bucolic verse of the Greek poet Theocritus and the self-conscious Latin reboot of the genre in Virgil's *Eclogues*. In effect, the Arcadian impulse is part of a recurrent pattern of "reform" that veers in the direction of a new simplicity.

As in Shakespeare's version of the pastoral ideal in, say, the Forest of Arden scenes in *As You Like It*, the pastoral posits an idyllic, innocent natural setting set apart from the corruption of urban life. Love—more specifically, the force of Eros—is the primary motivator in this unspoiled Arcadia (the name comes from an actual place in mainland Greece). Yet the paradox of evoking ancient shepherdesses and shepherds in an imaginary setting as emblems of "authenticity," of a reaction against the artificial, suggests the multiple layers of allegory, coding, and dissembling that are involved in the pastoral—layers that are made still more complex by the addition of the musical dimension, through vocal characterization and through instrumental signifiers. The irony of ecclesiastics (a strong presence among the Arcadians) being associated with amorous shepherds did not go unnoticed by Goethe, who notes: "But love is indispensable to poetry, so all [these avowed celibates] could do was to turn to super-terrestrial, more or less platonic longings and, following in the footsteps of their great forerunners, Dante and Petrarch, indulge themselves in allegorical delights, and it is this which gives their poems their peculiarly decorous character."

Yet if Arcadia awakens images of a harmonious Paradise, it is also a utopia resounding with lovesickness—the harmony turns

out to be fragile indeed. The simple dramatic scenario of *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* depicts a zero-sum game of desire, a stalemate in which the shepherdess Clori has two lovers: the earnest Tirsi and the more resilient Fileno, his rival. We hear first from Tirsi—the cantata is sometimes titled after the beginning of his first aria ("Cor fedele" or "faithful heart")—who despairs at the prospect of his sincere love being mocked when he observes Clori with Fileno; yet he is steadfast and cannot leave her. After she explains the situation to Tirsi as mere flirtatious play, reaffirming her love, Fileno is left to wonder what to make of her behavior with him. The two shepherds then find an emotional alliance.

For a long time after Handel's death, *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* existed as a mere footnote, with only parts of the cantata surviving in fragmentary form—including an ending that underscores the shadowy side of this Arcadia: a duet in which Tirsi and Fileno resolve to give up on love altogether. However, in 1960 the German conductor and musicologist Rudolf Ewerhart unearthed the complete manuscript in the archives known as the Santini Collection (housed in Münster). It contained the composer's revision to the originally cynical resolution of the story. In place of a duet, Handel supplied the trio "Vivere e non amar," with its acknowledgment that though love inevitably brings pain, it is not possible to live without love.

In her fascinating book *Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas*, Ellen T. Harris argues that Handel's circle of Italian patrons (also including his Medici family sponsors in Florence) "fostered and accepted" same-sex desire, and that this milieu is crucial to understanding how gender is coded and styled in such works as *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*. The cantata, in her view, thus "acts out" a situation that echoes one often-forgotten aspect of the Orpheus

myth, in which Tirsi and Fileno “respond to their loss of Clori with male friendship.” Referring to Handel’s original ending, she argues that “the male rejection of heterosexual love with a potentially dangerous and histrionic woman, and its replacement with idealized same-sex love ... lies at the heart” of the work. The change to the ending may have been made for a performance in Naples. “Certainly the original, misogynistic ending would not have been appropriate for the wedding festivities with which Handel was engaged in Naples,” Harris remarks.

Given how relatively recently the complete score has been available, it’s not surprising that we know little about the circumstances of the initial presentation of *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* at the Academy—was any staging involved?—or even about its original singers. Paul Agnew, who leads this production, suggests that the two shepherd roles may well have been sung by castrati; he has opted for vocal casting with a high and low soprano and a countertenor. Handel also had the resources of excellent instrumentalists at his disposal and uses them in important obbligato roles in dialogue with the voices, as in Tirsi’s evocation of nature or Clori’s reference to the nightingale in her first aria (when she appears with Fileno). The libretto, whose author is unknown, is replete with standard-issue pastoral imagery, yet the freshness of Handel’s inspiration is evident throughout.

“While he doesn’t have complete freedom and is writing to order,” says Agnew, “this is quite a big commission, to set a long libretto that allows him to write duets and a trio as well. It’s not just the pattern of recitative-aria, over and over again.” In fact, the presence of three voices is notable. This is Handel’s only surviving *cantata a tre con stromenti* (“cantata for three [singers] with instruments”) from

this period besides the virtuosic *Acì, Galatea e Polifemo*, which was commissioned for a marriage celebration in Naples.

Christopher Hogwood finds *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* “the most impressively operatic of the cantatas,” a precedent for the Naples work. In Rome, Handel had no opportunity to write operas per se because of a papal ban at the time on public performances of opera. But he was able to channel his operatic impulse into the format of the dramatic cantata and such oratorios as the staged *La resurrezione* (as Handel would again do, much later, when the market for his brand of opera dried up in London). “Here, in the Italian years, is the beginning of what will become his great operas,” Agnew observes. Indeed, he would soon start recycling material from *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*: “When he settles in London, he arrives running.”

Robert Mealy, director of Historical Performance at Juilliard, points out that in addition to drawing in later years from the tremendous outburst of creativity inspired by his time in Italy, Handel would continue to work in London with many of the singers and instrumentalists who had been involved in Italian compositions. The artistic affirmation that the composer found with his colleagues in these formative years extends beyond the musical sphere, he adds. The atmosphere of the Arcadian Academy was extraordinary in that it represented “a moment when music is coming into the foreground as being on the same level as what the great poets and painters and architects of Rome are doing.”

As a correlative to the search for musical authenticity that has motivated so much of the early music movement, Agnew says that another kind of performative authenticity needs to be taken into account when staging works such as *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*: “Handel’s lyricism doesn’t often sit easily

with our projecting complex modern emotions onto it. The characters are delineated in such delicate ways, and they are all perfectly defined features. Handel's genius is quite enough to bring out the colors in these characters without us having to project too much. There is no tragedy in this piece. If we try to put it into a context outside Arcadia, we change the inherent

nature of the piece and what Handel sees in it."

Thomas May is the English-language editor for the Lucerne Festival and writes about the arts for a wide variety of publications. His books include Decoding Wagner and The John Adams Reader.

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Meet the Artists

PHILIPPE DELVAL



Paul Agnew

Paul Agnew's long association with the world's leading conductors in the field of early music includes a discography of more than 100 recordings. His transition from an acclaimed vocal career to conducting began following a highly successful debut with Les Arts Florissants in Paris in 2007, when William Christie appointed him joint musical director; he has since gone on to lead the orchestra on tour to major venues such as Lincoln Center and the Wiener Konzerthaus, throughout France, and to Salzburg and China. In the U.S. he made his opera conducting debut with Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor* at the Opéra de Rennes and, in 2014, replaced William Christie to conduct Rameau's *Platée* in Vienna, Paris, and London. Recent engagements include Rameau's *Indes Galantes* at the Staatstheater Nürnbergthose and performances with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, and Finnish Radio Chamber Orchestra in Helsinki. At the forefront of the revival of the French baroque repertoire, Agnew made his debut singing the title role in Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* in Paris conducted by

William Christie. In recent seasons he extended his repertoire to include Mozart's *Idomeneo* under William Christie; Peter Quint in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* under Jane Glover; Haydn's *L'anima del filosofo* with Kammerorchesterbasel in Vienna and Eisenstadt; Handel's *Jephtha* in a new production by Katie Mitchell (conducted by Lars Ulrik Mortensen); and Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* at Opéra de Nice. Agnew made his debut with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden in a production of *Acis and Galatea* to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Handel's death. Agnew's discography includes *Lamentazione*—on which he conducts Les Arts Florissants choir in works by Scarlatti and Caldara—for Virgin, *The Food of Love—Songs by Purcell* for Ambrosie, Sally Beamish's *In Dreaming* for Virgin Classics, Rameau's *Dardanus* for ABC, and Dowland songs for Metronome. He is actively engaged in the training and preparation of the next generation of specialist instrumentalists as the co-director of the academy for young singers, Le Jardin des Voix.



Siman Chung

A native of Busan, South Korea, Siman Chung returned to the Metropolitan Opera

this season for its production of *Marnie*. In spring 2019 he will create a leading role in the new opera *Sadness and Beauty*, which will have its world premiere in Hong Kong. Earlier this year he sang the title role in the Berlioz edition of Gluck's *Orphée* with Opera Columbus, in Toronto, and at the Banff Festival. He appeared with Korean National Opera in Vivaldi's *Orlando finto pazzo*. Chung made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2015 singing Handel's *Messiah*, and he made his New York recital debut in 2017, presented by Opera Index, as a winner of its major prize. He also received first prize of the Gerda Lissner Foundation, best countertenor award in Barcelona's Viñas Competition, and a grant from the Sullivan Foundation.



**Anneliese
Klenetsky**

Soprano Anneliese Klenetsky is a second-year master's student at Juilliard under the tutelage of Sanford Sylvan. She was most recently the soloist in the New York premiere of *A Sibyl* by James Primosch at MoMA, under Joel Sachs. She collaborated with Juilliard415 and Vox Luminis on Handel's *Laudate Pueri Dominum*. Recent opera repertoire includes the Governess in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, Amaranta in Haydn's *La fedeltà premiata*, and La

bergère/Un Pâtre in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. She has sung numerous world premieres, including Jonathan Dawe's *Oroborium* with New Juilliard Ensemble, Theo Chandler's *Songs for Brooches* with the Juilliard Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall, and Jake Landau's *Les danseuses de Pigalle* at New York Live Arts. *Allen and Judy Brick Freedman Scholarship, Risë Stevens Scholarship*



Mer Wohlgemuth

Mer Wohlgemuth, from Winter Haven, Florida, is pursuing her master of music at Juilliard, where she studies with Marlina Malas. Wohlgemuth has performed in two different productions of *Die Zauberflöte*, with the Berlin Opera Academy and the Southern Illinois Music Festival, as the Zweiter Knaben, as well as Nerone in the Harrower Summer Workshop Young Artist Program's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. In 2017 she won an Encouragement Award at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (upper Midwest region) and second place in the Nebraska State and Midwest Regional NATS. She earned her bachelor's degree from Concordia University, Nebraska. *Philo Higley Scholarship, Leona Gordon Lowin Scholarship, Marion L. Dears Scholarship*

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Chiara Fasani Stauffer
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Keats Dieffenbach

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Chloe Kim
Rebecca Nelson
Manami Mizumoto

Viola

Rachell Ellen Wong
Hannah Geisinger

Cello

Morgan Little
Madeleine Bouissou

Double Bass

Jonathan Luik

Oboe

Welvin Potter
Andrew Blanke

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Harpichord

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Archlute

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(solo)

Theorbo

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Robert Mealy

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Corradina Caporello,
language preparation
Kenneth Merrill, *music preparation*

Supertitles

Celeste Montemarano

About Juilliard415

Since its founding in 2009, Juilliard415, the school's principal period-instrument ensemble, has made significant contributions to musical life in New York and beyond, bringing major figures in the field of early music to lead performances of both rare and canonical works of the 17th and 18th centuries. The many distinguished guests who have led Juilliard415 include Harry Bicket, William Christie, Monica Huggett, Ton Koopman, Nicholas McGegan, Rachel Podger, Jordi Savall, and Masaaki Suzuki. Juilliard415 tours extensively in the U.S. and abroad, having performed on five continents with notable appearances at the Boston Early Music Festival, Leipzig Bachfest, and Utrecht Early Music Festival (where Juilliard was the first-ever conservatory in residence), and on a ten-concert tour of New Zealand. With its frequent musical collaborator, the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, the ensemble has played throughout Italy, Japan, Southeast Asia, the U.K., and India. Juilliard415, which takes its name from the pitch commonly associated with the performance of Baroque music,

A=415, has performed major oratorios and fully staged productions: Handel's *Agrippina* and *Radamisto*; Bach's Matthew and John Passions; Cavalli's *La Calisto*; and performances in the U.S. and Holland of Bach's Mass in B minor conducted by Ton Koopman. The ensemble's most recent international appearances were in Bolivia, in a tour sponsored by the U.S. Department of State that marked the ensemble's South America debut. The 2017–18 season was notable for the Juilliard debuts of the rising conductor Jonathan Cohen and the Belgian vocal ensemble Vox Luminis, a side-by-side collaboration with Philharmonia Baroque in San Francisco, as well as return visits by Rachel Podger, William Christie, an all-Bach concert with Maestro Suzuki, and the rare opportunity to see a fully staged production of Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*. This season's international schedule includes performances in Canada, London, Versailles, and throughout Scandinavia. In New York, Juilliard415 welcomes Paul Agnew and Alfredo Bernardini for their Juilliard debuts.

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Bassoon

Dominic Teresi

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Beatrice Martin
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Avi Stein

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Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts

One of America's most prestigious programs for educating singers, The Juilliard School's Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts offers young artists programs tailored to their talents and needs. From bachelor and master of music degrees to an advanced artist diploma in opera studies, Juilliard provides frequent performance opportunities featuring singers in its own recital halls, on Lincoln Center's stages, and around New York City. Juilliard

Opera has presented numerous premieres of new operas as well as works from the standard repertoire. Juilliard graduates may be heard in opera houses and concert halls throughout the world; diverse alumni artists include well-known performers such as Leontyne Price, Renée Fleming, Risë Stevens, Tatiana Troyanos, Simon Estes, and Shirley Verrett. Recent alumni include Isabel Leonard, Susanna Phillips, Paul Appleby, Erin Morley, Sasha Cooke, and Julia Bullock.

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