

# The Vivaldi Project

**John Hsu, conductor**

*with*

**Elizabeth Field, violin**

**Gesa Kordes, violin**

**Stephanie Vial, violoncello**

Friday, February 7, 2014

7:30 pm

Recital Hall, School of Music



**UNCG**

School of  
Music, Theatre and Dance

*Program*

**Concerto Grosso in G Minor, Op. 6, No. 8**  
**"Fatto per la notte di natale"**

**Arcangelo Corelli**  
(1653-1713)

Vivace – Grave – Allegro  
Adagio – Allegro – Adagio  
Vivace – Allegro – Pastorale

Elizabeth Field and Gesa Kordes, violins

**Sinfonia No. 4 in B minor "Morte e sepoltura di Christo"**  
Grave – Allegretto – Adagio – Allegro assai

**Antonio Caldara**  
(1670-1736)

**Concerto Grosso in E minor**  
Larghetto – Andante  
Allegro  
Polonaise: Andante  
Allegro, ma non troppo

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

Elizabeth Field and Gesa Kordes, violins  
Stephanie Vial, violoncello

*Intermission*

**Cocnerto for Violonello in G major, RV 413**

**Antonio Vivaldi**  
(1678-1741)

Allegro  
Largo  
Allegro

Stephanie Vial, violoncello

**Sinfonia in F major, F. 67**

**Wilhelm Friedemann Bach**  
(1710-1784)

Vivace  
Andante  
Allegro  
Menuetto

**Sinfonia in B minor, Wq. 182**

**Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach**  
(1714-1788)

Allegretto  
Larghetto  
Presto

## Program Notes

The works in today's program were chosen to focus on the inherent dramatic qualities of all of the best of Baroque music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From the music of Corelli to C. P. E. Bach, there was a continuous increase of innovative musical ideas by the composers that broadened the scope of dramatic content in their works. On this tercentenary of C. P. E. Bach's birth, it is appropriate to note that he was the composer who was most responsible for passing on to Haydn and Mozart the contemporary compositional development of his time.

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) occupies perhaps the most important position in the history of Italian violin playing. With his own virtuosic performances and his five collections of solo and trio sonatas for the violin, he is undoubtedly one of the founders of the Italian school of violin playing. His *Concerti Grossi*, Opus 6, for a concertino of two violins and cello with strings and continuo, are nowadays among the most popular music for strings. These works must have made a strong impression on Handel during his visit in Italy, for we find many echoes of Corelli in Handel's *concerti grossi*.

Antonio Caldara (1670-1736) was an important composer in his day, having held the position of *maestro di cappella* in Mantua and Rome before settling in Vienna, where he was *Vice-Kapellmeister* in the imperial court for the last 20 years of his life. His operas, oratorios, as well as instrumental works were heard regularly at court. A favorite of Emperor Charles VI, he received a higher salary than the *Kapellmeister* Johann Joseph Fux. It is undeserved that Caldara's instrumental music is almost totally neglected today.

Baroque sacred concertos and sinfonias were often played in churches on special occasions. Corelli's Concerto, "Composed for Christmas Eve," and Caldara's Sinfonia, "The Death and Burial of Christ," are examples of music for Christmas and Holy Week respectively. Whether or not the composer had specific programmatic ideas when composing the works is questionable, but the different moods of the music easily suggest to the listener various scenes and feelings associated with these events in the life of Christ. For example, the first three sections of the Corelli concerto could perhaps suggest the jubilant announcement of the birth of Christ, the calmness of Christmas Eve, and the joyful reception of the good news. Certainly the serenity of the final Pastorale is an obvious depiction.

By contrast, the descriptive content in Caldara's Sinfonia is more detailed and concise. I see the four sections as presenting the following dramatic scenes. The first section expresses the suffering and the death of Christ. The second movement reflects the agitation of the apostles in receiving and passing along the news of the crucifixion. The brief Adagio transitional section is descriptive of the dramatic moment when the stone was rolled back and the tomb was found empty. The last movement describes the excitement of the crowd and ends with a prefiguration of the resurrection of Christ.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759), a German by birth, lived most of his life in England and became a British subject in 1726. He was a prolific composer of universal taste, and composed music in every genre and in every prevalent national style of the time. His *Concerto Grosso* in E Minor is an example of a peculiar secular concerto. The first movement of four antiphonal phrases and the second fugal movement are played without interruption and may be construed as an overture to the three movements that follow. The *allegro* is a concerto movement stressing the contrasting sonorities of the alternating solo and tutti sections. The polonaise has a frequent drone-like accompaniment from the low strings, which gives it a touch of a pastoral. The last movement is a short gigue in binary form. Handel's Opus 6, like

that of Corelli, consists of 12 concerti grossi for a concertino of two violins and cello with strings and continuo. They too have enjoyed great popularity.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) was arguably one of the most innovative and influential Italian composers of his generation. Following in the footsteps of Corelli, Vivaldi's infectious zest, enthusiasm, and virtuosity, the hallmarks of both his playing and his compositional style, inspired not only his contemporaries, such as J.S. Bach and Handel, but future generations of composers like C.P.E. Bach, Haydn, and Mozart. Like Handel, Vivaldi was a prolific composer, producing an impressive range of instrumental, vocal, and theatrical works. But perhaps his greatest achievement can be measured by his contributions to the concerto genre, which in addition to setting the standard for the solo concerto, would impact the development of the opera sinfonia and ultimately the orchestral symphony. Energy and verve characterize the outer *allegro* movements of the Cello Concerto in G major, RV413. The contrasting *largo*, elegant in its simplicity, is one of Vivaldi's finest such movements.

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710-1784) and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788), the two oldest sons of Johann Sebastian Bach, both received their complete musical training from their father, and became composers of distinction. Although we do not know in exact detail the substance and method of the father's teaching, the *Klavierbüchlein*, which he compiled for the benefit of his oldest son, gives us a good example of the kind of music that the Bach children learned early in life. Here is a collection of beautiful pieces, most of them by the father and a few by other composers, intended not only for the development of digital dexterity but also for the cultivation of what must have been considered good taste and compositional skills. As long as they were home, musical supervision was around the clock. Both became outstanding keyboard players and composers.

Wilhelm Friedemann was for some years the organist at the Sophienkirche in Dresden, and later at the Liebfrauenkirche in Halle. Although not as prolific as his younger brother, he was equally gifted and wrote some truly compelling and innovative music. In his Sinfonia in F Major, the first movement is propelled by the force and vitality of the rhythm, while the second is captivating in its unusually expressive instrumental figures.

Carl Philipp Emanuel enjoyed renown as a composer, keyboard player, and author. He spent some thirty years as a court musician and accompanist to Frederick the Great, who was an ardent flute player, and twenty years as director of music of the five principal churches in Hamburg. He was considered the leading keyboard player and teacher of his time. His treatise on keyboard playing was deemed the most authoritative. He was above all a prolific composer who is considered by many an important link between the Baroque and Classical, an innovator with revolutionary ideas about aesthetics. At a time when dynamics in music were mainly determined by harmony, he made dynamics a separate dimension of music unrelated to the intensity of the harmony, and juxtaposed unexpected loud and soft passages seemingly at random. These surprises plus frequent irregular phrase structure, quick changes in mood, rhythm, harmony, and melody, all were used to increase the dramatic effect of the music. His Sinfonia in B Minor, W. 182 is a prime example of the theatrical nature of his music. The first half of the main theme is marked *p* and the second half *f*, followed by a loud unsingable orchestral section in which the violins' rapid figurations are based on scales. This sequence of musical events could easily accompany an operatic scene in which a gentle and pleading first singer is being rebuffed by a stern singer, triggering an outburst that extends beyond the emotional intensity of vocal expression.

*Notes by John Hsu*

## **THE VIVALDI PROJECT**

*John Hsu, Guest Conductor*

*Elizabeth Field, Leader*

*Violin I: Elizabeth Field, Jennifer Roig-Francoli, Alison Edberg*

*Violin II: Gesa Kordes, Christoph Richter, Leah Peroutka*

*Viola: Dana Maiben, Suzanne Rouso*

*Cello: Stephanie Vial, Alice Robbins*

*Bass: Anne Trout*

*Harpsichord: Jennifer Streeter*

**John Hsu** is the Old Dominion Foundation Professor of Music Emeritus at Cornell University, where he taught for 50 years (1955-2005). As an instrumentalist and conductor, he has toured throughout this country and Europe, and made award-winning recordings. Among them are his CD of Haydn Baryton Trios (with violist David Miller and cellist Fortunato Arico), which was chosen Winner in the Music Retailers Association's Annual Award for Excellence in London, 1989; and his CD Symphonies for the Esterhazy Court by Joseph Haydn (with the Apollo Ensemble), which was nominated for the 1996 International Cannes Classical Music Award. He is also the editor of the first modern edition of the complete instrumental works by Marin Marais, published by Broude Brothers Limited and The Broude Trust. In May 2000, the government of France and its Ministry of Culture bestowed the high honor of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres on John Hsu in recognition of his life-long commitment to French Baroque music as a scholar, performer, and teacher. He is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, which awarded him the Honorary Doctor of Music degree in 1971, and the Outstanding Alumni Award in 2003. He is also Artistic Director Emeritus of the Aston Magna Foundation for Music and the Humanities, the pioneering musical organization in the historical performance movement in this country, founded by Albert Fuller in 1972. From 2006 to 2009, he served as Artistic Director and Conductor of the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra.

**The Vivaldi Project**, under the co-direction of Elizabeth Field and Stephanie Vial, has been gaining critical acclaim for its brilliant and expressive string playing, as well as its innovative programming which combines scholarship and performance to both educate and delight audiences. The members and guest artists of The Vivaldi Project include many of the leading early music soloists, concertmasters, teachers, and scholars from throughout the U.S. Since it was founded by Field in 2006, the Vivaldi Project has performed throughout the DC area and the country, including live performances and interviews for Washington's WETA, North Carolina's WCPE, and Minnesota Public Radio. In 2010, the ensemble toured the Piedmont region of North Carolina with an unprecedented performance of all six of C.P.E. Bach's String Sinfonias, W. 182, under guest conductor John Hsu. The Vivaldi Project, and its educational arm, the Institute for Early Music on Modern Instruments, strive to build relationships with local arts organizations to bring a deeper appreciation for our classical music heritage to diverse metropolitan, rural, and underserved communities. The name, Vivaldi Project, refers not only to the group's core repertoire (the extraordinary works of the virtuoso violinist and composer Antonio Vivaldi) but also the project of probing into the roots of Vivaldi's distinctive musical style, his innovative contributions to string writing, the concerto genre, and programmatic orchestral music which have had ramifications that reverberate into the 21st century. It is the central belief of the Vivaldi Project that musical performances are Events. Music from the 17th and 18th century was conceived at a time when its very existence depended on the personal and spontaneous expressions of live performers for live audiences. Highly rhetorical in nature, music was viewed as a language in its own right—just as capable of communicating ideas and emotions, only through melody

and harmony rather than words. It is interaction with the audience which renders each performance unique, and at a Vivaldi Project concert, the audience becomes an essential part of the music-making process. [www.thevivaldiproject.org](http://www.thevivaldiproject.org)

**Stephanie Vial**, cellist, is a sought after performer, lecturer and teacher and has recorded for Dorian, Naxos, Hungaroton, and Centaur Records. Vial has taught at Duke and Cornell Universities, and is an adjunct faculty member at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a regular guest teacher at the Curtis Institute of Music. She is the co-director of The Vivaldi Project and its annual Institute for Early Music on Modern Instruments. Her book, *The Art of Musical Phrasing in the Eighteenth Century*, published by the University of Rochester Press' Eastman Studies in Music Series, was praised by Malcolm Bilson as "inspired scholarship" and "essential reading."