

Baroque Bohemia & Beyond VIII

Josef Mysliveček: Flute Concerto
Jan Stamič: Sinfonias a Quattro
František X. Richter: Sinfonias a Quattro

Ana de la Vega *flute*
English Chamber Orchestra
New Dutch Academy
Simon Murphy

alto



Baroque Bohemia and Beyond, Volume VIII

Jan Vaclav Stamič: *Sinfonia a Quattro in A Major*

1 Allegro assai 4:32 **2** Andante 4:56 **3** Presto 2:29

Stamič: *Sinfonia a Quattro in D Major*

4 Presto 5:41 **5** Andante 7:03 **6** Presto 2:21

František Xaver Richter: *Sinfonia a Quattro in E-Flat Major*

7 Allegro 4:17 **8** Andante 3:35 **9** Presto fugato 5:41

Richter: *Sinfonia a Quattro in G Major*

10 Allegro 6:46 **11** Andantino 6:06 **12** Allegro 4:28

New Dutch Academy Chamber Ensemble

Simon Murphy, *conductor*

Josef Mysliveček: *Flute Concerto in D Major*

13 Allegro moderato 6:34 **14** Andante 7:38 **15** Allegro molto 4:00

Ana de la Vega, *flute*

English Chamber Orchestra • Stephanie Gonley, *leader*

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[13]-[15] Recorded Henry Wood Hall, 2016

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By the middle of the seventeenth century, following the Thirty Years War, the Hapsburgs had taken over the Kingdom of Bohemia and had begun to oppress its people. It was impossible, however, to suppress the Czech love for music, a fact much exploited by the Austrian nobles who filled their new Bohemian estates with musically talented servants who could both serve and entertain their masters. Music therefore became more of a private activity than a public one and, once the seat of government had been transferred to Vienna, Prague consequently ceased to be the centre of artistic endeavour that it had hitherto been. Thus it is hardly surprising that, over the years, many Czech musicians decided to move away from their homeland in an attempt to find work in other parts of Europe. Inevitably, some musicians went to Vienna itself, for example, Josef Bárta, Leopold Koželuh, Jan Křtitel Vaňhal and the Vranický brothers, but some, including the Benda family went to Berlin, Antonín Rejcha eventually settled in Paris while others, notably Jan Václav Stamic and František Xaver Richter, moved to Mannheim. Josef Mysliveček made his home in Italy.

Many of those composers who did leave Bohemia to seek work elsewhere found it necessary to change the spelling of their names (and in some cases the names themselves) to make it easier for foreigners to understand and pronounce them. One of these was Jan Václav Antonín Stamic (1717–57). There are numerous spellings of his family name and several Christian names are attributed to him, the most often used combination being Johann Stamitz. Born at Neměcký Brod (now Havlíčkov Brod), southwest of Prague, Stamic received his first musical education from his father, who was the village schoolteacher and choirmaster at the

local church, before enrolling at the Jesuit Gymnasium at nearby Jihlava. He later spent one academic year at Prague University but, after that, there is no precise record of his movements for the next few years. It was in the early 1740s that he moved to Mannheim where, before long, he became first violinist at the court of the Elector and then Konzertmeister and director of instrumental music. Thus it was he who turned the Mannheim Orchestra into the most celebrated ensemble of its time and one much praised by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. In 1754 Stamic visited Paris but a year or so after his return to Mannheim he died, in March 1757, at the age of only thirty-nine.

Stamic was particularly renowned for his symphonies of which over fifty are extant. His early works in this form are for strings alone and were cast in three movements but later he tended to add a fourth and also to include woodwind instruments and timpani.

In a letter to his father written from Strasbourg on 26 October 1778, Mozart described how well liked he was in that city and how he had been receiving all sorts of distinguished visitors. One of these was Kapellmeister Richter who, according to Mozart, 'now lives very economically, for instead of forty bottles of wine a day he only swills about twenty'. In a footnote to this letter, Mozart told his father that the previous Sunday he had heard in the Minster a new mass by Richter which was 'charmingly written'. František (Franz) Xaver Richter (1709-89) was born on 1 December 1709. Not much seems to have been recorded about his early life and even his place of birth is uncertain. (It is usually given as Holešov which is some forty-five miles northeast of Brno.) By 1747, however, his name had started to appear as a singer in the list of musicians at the court

of the Elector Palatine Carl Theodor in Mannheim. During his time in Mannheim Richter composed an oratorio to be sung on Good Friday, wrote a treatise on composing and, eventually, became the Elector's court composer. It was in April 1769 that he moved to Strasbourg, another city on the Rhine, to take up the post of Kapellmeister at the cathedral there. Richter was also highly regarded as a teacher, one of his pupils being Karel (or Karl), son of Jan Václav Stamic.

Like Stamic, Richter was also a prolific composer of symphonies of which he is known to have written about eighty. Several of these were for four-part string orchestra and are in just three movements as are the two on this recording.

Josef Mysliveček (1737-81) was born in the village of Horní Šárka near Prague in March 1737. His father was a prosperous miller whose intention was that both his sons should follow in the same profession. So it was that in 1761 Josef became a master miller. However, on the death of his father, he renounced his share of the family business, passing it on to his brother, so that he could concentrate on becoming a full-time musician. By then he had been studying the organ, the violin and composition for some time and, in 1760, he had had published anonymously six symphonies, each of which was named after one of first six months of the year.

It was in 1763 that he went to Italy in order to study in Venice with Giovanni Pescetti who was both the organist at St Mark's and a renowned opera composer. He was to spend much of the rest of his life in Italy and his music was soon to become popular throughout that country in cities such as Bologna, Florence, Milan, Rome and Venice. It seems that the

Italians found his name far too difficult to pronounce so the Venetians, translating his name into Italian, called him *Il venatorino* ('the little hunter') while the Neapolitans dubbed him *Il divino boemo* ('the Divine Bohemian') and this is inscribed on his memorial bust in Prague city.

In his heyday he was much in demand as a composer and was highly thought of by the Mozart family. Wolfgang Amadeus and his father, Leopold, had first met him in Bologna in 1770 and the latter had reported to his wife that their new acquaintance was 'an honest fellow' and that they had become 'intimate friends'. As well as sonatas and other instrumental music, Mysliveček composed about thirty operas, various oratorios and cantatas and several works for orchestra. The hitherto missing manuscript of his Flute Concerto in D major, recorded here, came to light in 1943 when the Czech musicologist, conductor and flautist, Milan Munclinger (1923-86) discovered it in the library of Warsaw University.

The last years of Mysliveček's comparatively short, albeit colourful, life were blighted by the venereal disease with which he was suffering and also from botched surgery he received in Munich and which had resulted in the loss of his nose. He eventually died a pauper in Rome, it is said, naked and in a shed.

Ana de la Vega was born to British and Argentinean parents in Australia and studied at the University of Sydney with Margaret Crawford. Later, in Paris, she became a pupil of the renowned French flautist and teacher, Raymond Guiot, and then studied with Catherine Cantin, herself a pupil of Jean-Pierre Rampal, at the Paris Conservatoire. Since then she has been Principal Flute with the Orquestra Sinfonica do Norte in Portugal and with

various orchestras in Germany. She is also the founder and artistic director of the London International Players and has performed worldwide as a soloist and chamber musician.

Born in 1973 in the Balmain suburb of Sydney, Simon Murphy studied the viola with Leonid Volovelsky at the University of Sydney before moving to the Netherlands in 1996 where he enrolled at the Utrecht Conservatoire. There his teacher for both classical and baroque viola was Alda Stuurop. He has made extensive studies in Mannheim of the notable group of composers that were based there in the 18th Century. Subsequently he has appeared as a chamber soloist at many international festivals and has given lectures and workshops throughout Holland. He is also a member of the Amsterdam String Quartet and the founder of the New Dutch Academy. Launched in 2002, the Academy's two ensembles – the Chamber Orchestra and the Chamber Soloists – have given many performances at festivals and taken part in lecture recitals dealing with the connections between art, music, cultural theory and aesthetics.

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New Dutch Academy Chamber Ensemble

Violins: Lidewij van der Voort; Judith Steenbrink; Fredrik From; Rachael Beesley; John Wilson Meyer; Hanneke Wierenga; Tuomo Suni; Mario Konaka; Alida Schat; Antina Hugoson; Josine van den Akker

Violas: Jan Willem Vis; Esther Lombardi-van der Eijk; Eline Snoek

Cellos: Judith-Maria Becker; Mimé Yamahiro; Thomas Pitt

Double Bass: Robert Franenberg; Joshua Cheatham

Theorbo: Andreas Rizzato Arend

Harpsichord: Menno van Delft; Haru Kitamika

Pitch: A=415.3Hz

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