

# The Italian Baroque

SUNDAY | 2:30 PM

MARCH 26, 2017

MONDAY | 7:30 PM

MARCH 27, 2017

Salvatore Di Vittorio, conductor

Gwyn Roberts, recorder

## PROGRAM

### CORELLI

Concerto Grosso No. 4 in D Major,  
Op. 6 (c. 1712)

- I: Adagio – Allegro
- II: Adagio
- III: Vivace
- IV: Allegro

### VIVALDI

Sinfonia *Al santo sepolcro* in  
B minor, RV 169 (1728)

- I: Adagio molto
- II: Allegro ma poco

### VIVALDI

Concerto for Flautino in C Major,  
RV 443 (1728)

- I: Allegro
- II: Largo
- III: Allegro molto

### DI VITTORIO

*Ode Corelliana\**

INTERMISSION

### VIVALDI

*Il gardellino*: Concerto for Piccolo  
in D Major, RV 428 (1728)

### RESPIGHI

Suite for Strings (1902)\*\*  
(ed. Di Vittorio)

- I: Ciaccona
- II: Siciliana
- III: Giga
- IV: Sarabanda
- V: Burlesca
- VI: Rigaudon

\* World Premiere

\*\* Philadelphia Premiere

# The Italian Baroque

## Program Notes

### ARCANGELO CORELLI (1653-1713)

#### CONCERTO GROSSO IN D MAJOR, OP. 6 NO. 4

Arcangelo Corelli was one of the most influential composers of the early Baroque, and a major influence on a younger generation of composers including Bach, Vivaldi and Handel. He was the greatest violinist of his day, known for his projection and purity of tone, and he systematized what are now considered the foundational techniques of violin playing. He was not a virtuoso in the modern sense, being more concerned with the beauty and presence of the sound. It was largely his remarkable playing that established the violin as the principal instrument in orchestral ensembles.

Corelli published relatively few works, all instrumental, and his set of 12 Concerti Grossi, Op. 6 are considered his greatest achievement. The date of composition cannot be assigned as Corelli reworked his music continually. They were published after his death, but had circulated in manuscript for some time before. A concerto grosso makes use of the contrast between a small group of instruments, the concertino (in this case, two violins and a cello) and the larger ensemble, or concerto grosso, (in this case violins, violas and basses). The Concerto Grosso No. 4 is a sonata da chiesa (church sonata), which refers more to its four movement organization, although they were sometimes used liturgically. The Concerto Grosso No. 4 is one of Corelli's most tightly constructed and buoyant examples.

The Concerto Grosso No. 4 opens with a slow pizzicato introduction played by the full ensemble before moving to a lively Allegro. Phrases are passed imitatively not only between the ensembles but between the individual voices in each ensemble as well, creating a very full-textured sound. Corelli also uses a typically Baroque contrast in dynamics, with a phrase played forte and then repeated piano. The Adagio is built from slowly moving scale passages leavened with occasional leaps of an octave or a fifth. The third movement, Vivace, is really a minuet featuring some of Corelli's most beautiful melodic, cantabile writing. The final movement is a brilliant Allegro which, like the opening movement, is largely constructed from harmonic progressions, but also gives the solo first violin the opportunity to explore what Corelli considered the upper range of the instrument with a series of sustained trills.

### ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678-1741)

#### SINFONIA AL SANTO SEPOLCRO, RV 169

#### CONCERTO FOR FLAUTINO, RV 443

#### CONCERTO FOR PICCOLO "IL GARDINELLO", RV 428

Antonio Vivaldi was one of the most prolific and influential Baroque composers. Bach paid him the ultimate compliment of repurposing nine of his concertos into keyboard works. While some works were published, most of his music had vanished from sight until the 1930's. Vivaldi had found it more profitable to sell autograph manuscripts to collectors than to publish it, and his vast collection of manuscripts was seemingly lost after his death in 1741. It was only the chance discovery of a trove of manuscripts in an Italian boarding school nearly 200 years later that allowed his music to become known again.

Vivaldi was the son of a professional violinist and learned his craft from his father. He entered the church as his best opportunity for advancement, but suffered an attack of asthma while saying his first Mass and received a dispensation from performing his clerical duties. He was appointed in 1703 as violin master at the Ospedale della Pietà, a girls' orphanage in Venice, and he maintained his association with the Ospedale until 1740. The characterization of the Ospedale merely as an orphanage is not quite accurate. It housed the illegitimate daughters of wealthy and powerful noblemen. It was well endowed and the girls received an excellent education in music and the arts in relatively luxurious surroundings. This was something of an investment for the girls' fathers because illegitimate daughters were often married off to minor nobility and helped create a web of familial connections that were important in maintaining political power and influence.

Vivaldi began composing a steady stream of concerti, sonatas, sinfonias and sacred choral music, both for instruction and for performance by his students. Under his direction, the Ospedale's public performances developed a reputation for musical excellence that spread well beyond Venice, and an examination of his scores indicates that he had very high expectations indeed for his students.

### SINFONIA AL SANTO SEPOLCRO, RV 169

The Sinfonia al santo sepolcro (to the holy sepulchre) was among the music rediscovered in the 1930's and its date and circumstances of composition are not known. It is set for strings only – Vivaldi clearly marks it “without organ or keyboard” and is in two movements. It was probably intended for a Good Friday liturgy. The Adagio opens very unusually with a sustained F-sharp over which is placed a G-natural, like the start of a chromatic passage, but also has the dissonance of a minor second. This is immediately followed by a tritone, another dissonant interval. Vivaldi is taking a typical Baroque affect, a chromatic passage representing Christ's suffering, and going a step further by using it to introduce an unsettling tonal ambiguity. The Allegro ma poco is really a slowly developing fugue, but it follows the same course as the Adagio. Short chromatic passages are woven through the music, moving from voice to voice, and leading seventh chords never resolve the way you expect. In a brilliant touch, Vivaldi unifies the piece by repeating the opening melodic line of the Adagio just before the end, when the work finally comes to rest in a long-awaited B minor chord.

### CONCERTO FOR FLAUTINO, RV443

Probably the first question is on what instrument should this concerto be performed. The “little flute” that Vivaldi intended was the sopranino recorder. But when this concerto was unearthed and published in the 1950's, its editor (the composer Francisco Malipiero) assigned it to the piccolo. It is named both ways, and modern performance practice is split 50-50 between the two instruments. Vivaldi would not have minded, as he himself often repurposed concerti for other instruments. It and a companion piece were composed around 1728, probably with a specific player in mind. If it was one of Vivaldi's students at the Ospedale, she must have been a player of unusual talent, for the two concerti require a virtuosic technique of the highest order.

The C Major concerto, RV 443, is scored for flautino, strings and harpsichord, and except in solo passages, the flautino doubles the first violins. The opening Allegro provides full opportunity for the soloist to demonstrate his technique. The solo passages are filled with rapid scales and arpeggios, trills and intricate passagework that often call for increasingly wide intervals to be quickly negotiated. The Largo opens with a slow, dance-like melody for the solo instrument which segues into long, elaborate, triplet-filled runs, with the orchestra mostly providing a quiet, sustained accompaniment. The final movement, Allegro molto, opens with a brisk melody that functions as a ritornello, repeating in various keys and guises to segment the sections of solo pyrotechnics. Vivaldi adds more rhythmic variation to the soloist line, with syncopations and extended bravura passages of triplets. The orchestra is virtually silent during the final extended flautino section, just providing the figured bass line, before the tutti ensemble joins in at last to bring the concerto to an exciting close.

### CONCERTO FOR FLUTE IN D MAJOR, OP. 10, NO. 3, RV 428 “IL GARDELLINO”

Vivaldi's set of six flute concerti, Op. 10, was put together in 1728 at the request of his publisher in Amsterdam. They were among the first published concerti for transverse flute, an instrument that had only recently been introduced to Italy but clearly one that Vivaldi understood well. The third concerto is an adaptation of an earlier work which had already seen *concerto grosso* versions for flute and violin or oboe and violin and would later be arranged for bassoon. They all bore the subtitle *Il gardinello* (The goldfinch) and were among a large number of works in which Vivaldi imitated the sounds of nature.

The opening *Allegro* gives the flute full rein to imitate the goldfinch with long runs, quick dotted melodies, and repeated alternating pitches and trills. The violins join in this imitation with their own trills in parallel thirds, a technique Vivaldi used to advantage in *The Four Seasons*. The second movement, *Cantabile (Largo)*, is interestingly scored for just the solo flute and continuo (cello and harpsichord in this case). It is in the form of a *sicilienne*, a traditional country dance, and the dotted rhythms and 12/8 meter give the music a very pastoral feeling. The final *Allegro* is brilliant and energetic and uses the typical *ritornello* format where the lively opening orchestral music separates the virtuosic passages for the solo flute.

## SALVATORE DI VITTORIO (B. 1967)

### ODE CORELLIANA

Composer and conductor Salvatore Di Vittorio is heir to the Italian neo-classical orchestral tradition of Gian Francesco Malipiero, Giuseppe Martucci, and, of course, Ottorino Respighi, whose music he has not only championed but also edited, orchestrated, and completed compositionally. Di Vittorio's own music is rich and sonorous, and like Respighi, he is a master of orchestral color. He has written orchestral, choral and vocal music and opera, but is best known for his lyrical and evocative program symphonies and tone poems. Also like Respighi, he has a strong interest in music of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque, which is often the inspiration for his own compositions, including *Ode Corelliana*.

Di Vittorio's *Ode Corelliana*, for strings and harpsichord, receives its world premiere in these March 2017 concerts. The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia invited Di Vittorio to compose *Ode Corelliana* following the success of his *Venus and Adonis*, for small orchestra, which received its world premiere in May 2016 under Maestro Dirk Brosse.

*Ode Corelliana* is based on Di Vittorio's affection for the music of Italian Baroque composer Arcangelo Corelli, especially his *Concerti Grossi*, one of which is included in this evening's musical program. Di Vittorio found much inspiration from the Adagio of Corelli's Concerto No. 8 "Christmas", which has been featured in many films including *Master and Commander*, starring Russell Crowe. The poignant, rising melody peaking at the end of Corelli's famous Adagio gives way to Di Vittorio's sweeping lyricism and lush orchestral textures.

## OTTORINO RESPIGHI (1879-1936)

### SUITE FOR STRINGS

Ottorino Respighi completed two courses of study in composition at Bologna's Liceo Musicale and studied orchestration privately with Rimsky-Korsakov, but he still approached a career as a composer gingerly. For the first decade of his musical career, he was primarily a violinist, and although he composed a great deal of music, very little of what he wrote before 1910 was ever performed or published. When Respighi died in 1936, he left behind a treasure trove of unpublished manuscripts and sketches. In 2008, Respighi's heirs engaged composer and conductor Salvatore Di Vittorio to edit, complete (where necessary) and orchestrate a number of these early works for publication. Di Vittorio has released seven of these early works in critically acclaimed editions, including the 1902 *Suite for Strings*, and they provide a fascinating view into Respighi's development as a composer.

The *Suite for Strings* consists of six dance movements, a Baroque format to which Respighi would return in his three suites of *Ancient Airs and Dances*. The string writing is thick and sonorous, and there is a strong contrapuntal flavor to the music which unifies the piece and imbues even the faster dances with a sense of gravity. The opening Ciaccona is a passacaglia, a set of variations on a repeating harmonic progression, and is followed by a graceful and lyrical Siciliana. The Giga is lively music, with staccato accents and Baroque trills and ornaments. The Sarabande is contrasting music, melodic and stately, a dance which was traditionally paired with a Giga. The Burlesca features a genial, good-humored melody propelled forward by pizzicato cadences. The concluding Rigaudon is a lively two-step, which bookends a more introspective middle section.

# Salvatore Di Vittorio, conductor and composer



Born in Palermo, Italy, Salvatore Di Vittorio has achieved international recognition as a composer and conductor, hailed “a lyrical musical spirit, respectful of the ancient Italian tradition”, “following in the footsteps of Ottorino Respighi”—Luigi Verdi, Philharmonic Academy of Bologna. He gained considerable attention with his orchestration and completion of Respighi’s rediscovered first Violin Concerto (in A) and other works, a commission received from the great nieces and archive curator of the Bolognese composer. He was first noticed when his compositions were programmed with Respighi by Italian chamber orchestras. He then aroused national interest as Music Director/Founder of the Chamber Orchestra of New York which debuted in 2007 at Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall.

Di Vittorio has been featured by leading orchestras, including Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Teatro Massimo Opera Palermo, Orchestra Regionale Filarmonica Veneta, Orchestra da Camera Fiorentina, Orchestra Sinfonica della Calabria, Orchestra of the Swan of Stratford-upon-Avon, Vancouver Island Symphony, Orquesta de Cámara Bellas Artes, Santa Rosa Symphony, The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, and San Diego Symphony.

His music is inspired by philosophical and programmatic themes that captivate each listener with poignant, romantic lyricism and magnificent orchestrations. Di Vittorio is fascinated with the world of storytelling through symphonic poem. In 2015, San Diego Symphony world premiered his orchestral *Fanfara del Mare Su un Tema di Monteverdi*, written for the centennial of Balboa Park and Organ Pavilion at Copley Symphony Hall. His upcoming Sinfonia N. 4 “Metamorfosi” for the Teatro Massimo Opera Orchestra of Palermo will highlight the magical stories in Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, with each movement drawing inspiration from an Italian painting related to the stories.

In 2012, Di Vittorio made his conducting debut with Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana at Teatro Politeama Garibaldi with the world premiere of

his Sinfonia N. 3 “Templi di Sicilia” and European premieres of his *Overture*

*Respighiana* and Respighi’s First Violin Concerto. *Giornale di Sicilia* praised the evening “From Pines of Rome to the Temples of Sicily”, depicting Di Vittorio’s third symphony as “a commemorative memorial with a dimension of insularity, which during great peaks reveals suggestions of an international musical palette.” *La Repubblica* acknowledged Di Vittorio’s neo-classical works and in particular his third symphony, presented alongside *Fountains of Rome*, as “his first composition to capture Respighi’s impressionism, together with [influences of] Berlioz and Richard Strauss.” Mayor Leoluca Orlando “awarded Di Vittorio the Medal of Palermo, recognizing the great importance of Di Vittorio’s work as a promoter of the Palermo around the world”—*Il Moderatore*.

Di Vittorio’s Naxos recordings with the Chamber Orchestra of New York have been airing worldwide and receiving much critical praise. “Top billing goes to Di Vittorio’s completion of [Respighi’s] Violin Concerto”—*Gramophone Magazine*; “Unabashedly tonal, traditional, and Italian, his style employs a swelling lyricism”—*American Record Guide*; “A brilliant and sparkling semi-pastiche overture and two symphonies, which are pictorial-philosophical, approachable works distinguished by his Respighian sense of orchestral color”—*Records International*; “[Di Vittorio] is a composer of beautiful music extraordinaire”—*Fanfara Magazine*; “[The Violin Concerto] sounds like genuine Respighi, with anticipations of characteristic moments in *Pines of Rome*”—*Classics Today*; “his revisions, transcriptions and completions are sensitive to Respighi’s Neo-Baroque style”—*Music Web International*; “*Respighiana*...[is] a happy and very lively score”—*David’s Review Corner*; “Di Vittorio proves more and more to be an important Italian composer...one can also find hints of Scarlatti and

Rossini; a modernism resolutely neoromantic, also verismo, even cinematographic...without concerns of criticism from the avant-garde... *Respighiana*, entwined with Rossini crescendos and fanfares alla *Pines*, a contemporary music entirely timeless"– Abeillemusique; "a musician of remarkable attainment..., a composer of prodigious imagination and talent"– Houston Public Radio/NPR.

Di Vittorio began his musical studies in Italy at an early age with his father, Giuseppe, who introduced him to the operas of Verdi and Puccini

– forever influencing his musical destiny. He later studied composition with Ludmila Ulehla and composition/conducting with Giampaolo Bracali at Manhattan School of Music, and aesthetics/ancient philosophy at Columbia University. He is a protégé of Francesco Carotenuto (Rome), Piero Bellugi (Florence), and John Farrer (London). His compositions are published by Panastudio/Casa Ricordi (Universal Music), recorded on Naxos Records, and listed in David Daniels' Orchestral Music.





## Gwyn Roberts, recorder



Photo: Becky O'hlers

Gwyn Roberts is one of America's foremost performers on recorder and baroque flute, praised by *Gramophone* for her "sparkling technique, compelling musicianship, and all-around excellence." She is also co-founder and director of Philadelphia Baroque Orchestra *Tempesta di Mare*, recently hailed by the *Miami Herald* as "the model of a top-notch period orchestra." Now in the 15th season of its Philadelphia Concert Series, *Tempesta di Mare* tours from Oregon to Prague, recently released its 10th CD on the British label Chandos, and reaches audiences in 56 countries around the world with broadcasts of its live performances.

Roberts' soloist engagements include the Portland Baroque Orchestra, *Recitar Cantando* of Tokyo, the Washington Bach Consort and the Kennedy Center. In addition to Chandos, she has recorded for Deutsche Grammophon, Dorian, Sony Classics, Vox, PolyGram, PGM, and Radio France. Her latest solo recordings include the Fasch Recorder Concerto in F, Bach's Concerto in G after BWV 530, and Sonatas by Francesco Mancini. She enjoys collaborating with living composers, recently recording James Primosch's *Sacred Songs and Meditations* with the 21st Century Consort for Albany Records.

She is an enthusiastic educator, with recent masterclass engagements at the Curtis Institute of Music, the Hartt School of Music and the Oregon Bach Festival. She is Professor of Recorder and Baroque Flute at the Peabody Conservatory, Director of Early Music at the University of Pennsylvania, and directs the Virtuoso Recorder Program at the Amherst Early Music Festival.

Gwyn Roberts has played recorder since childhood. As a teenager, she wore out her record player listening to Frans Brüggen's

groundbreaking performances of Bach, Vivaldi and Hotteterre, and fell in love with the rhetoric, drama and nuance of Baroque music.

After graduating from Bryn Mawr College, she went to Utrecht Conservatory in the Netherlands, where she studied recorder with Brüggen's protégé Marion Verbruggen as well as with Leo Meilink, and also studied baroque flute with Marten Root. In the years before and after Holland, she logged nine seasons as a member of Piffaro, the Renaissance Band, traveling around the US and Europe playing historical woodwinds before settling down in Philadelphia to record her first solo CD of Francesco Maria Veracini's recorder sonatas.

When that recording was about to go to press, the label sent a last-minute email asking Roberts to name the group, because "this thing has legs." On a whim, she and lutenist Richard Stone named it "Tempesta di Mare," after Vivaldi's concerto depicting a storm at sea. Sure enough, the CD earned a five-star rating from *BBC Music Magazine*, launching the ensemble that would soon grow into Philadelphia's baroque orchestra.

With *Tempesta di Mare*, Roberts and Stone have performed the modern premieres of dozens of lost or forgotten baroque masterpieces, prompting the *Philadelphia Inquirer* to describe it as "an old-music group that acts like a new-music group, by pushing the cutting edge back rather than forward." Their next two CDs will feature music by Janitsch and Telemann.

In between gigs, Roberts loves to cook. You should try her peach Pavlova.