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RETROSPECT
TRIO

Henry Purcell
Ten Sonatas in Four Parts





RETROSPECT TRIO

Henry Purcell Ten Sonatas in Four Parts

Sophie Gent *violin*
Matthew Truscott *violin*
Jonathan Manson *bass viol*
Matthew Halls *harpsichord/organ*

recorded 3rd – 6th June 2008
in St Martin's Church, East Woodhay, Berkshire, UK
recorded and produced by Philip Hobbs
post-production by Julia Thomas, Finesplice UK
keyboard technician : Edmund Pickering
pitch : A = 415 Hz
temperament : modified 1/5th-comma meantone
design and cover photography by John Haxby



RETROSPECT ENSEMBLE

RETROSPECT ENSEMBLE

May 1st, 2009 sees the much-anticipated launch of Retrospect Ensemble with a performance of Handel's spectacular late masterpiece, *Jephtha*, at the 2009 Norfolk and Norwich Festival. Led by the dynamic young conductor and keyboard player, Matthew Halls, (former Artistic Director of The King's Consort) Retrospect Ensemble intends to take its musicians and audiences on an exciting journey, exploring the repertoire of four centuries and embracing the practices, styles and aesthetics of former ages with renewed vigour and a fresh approach. The choice of name ensures that the group will not be identified with one particular area of music or historical period, an approach typical of the ensemble's inquisitive and energetic musicians.

Forming the backbone of its UK concert season will be a series at Wigmore Hall. Retrospect's first season at Wigmore Hall in 2009/10 will include performances of Handel's *Apollo e Dafne*, Bach cantatas with countertenor, Robin Blaze, orchestral masterpieces by Mozart and Haydn and a performance of Purcell's *Fairy Queen* featuring soloists from the group's Young Artist Programme.

In addition to opening the 2009 Norfolk and Norwich Festival with a special performance to mark the 250th anniversary year of Handel's death, other forthcoming engagements include a concert of Bach cantatas at the Edinburgh International Festival with soprano Carolyn Sampson, performances of Vivaldi cantatas in the UK with Robin Blaze and, further afield, tours to Korea, Israel, Portugal and Switzerland.

Artistic Director Matthew Halls' recent engagements include performances in prominent venues such as Het Concertgebouw, Amsterdam; La Cité de la Musique, Paris; the Konzerthaus, Berlin; the Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels; and guest conducting engagements with orchestras such as the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Hessischer Rundfunk Sinfonie Orchester, Norrköping Sinfonieorchester, and Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo.

For further information and news of forthcoming concerts and recordings please visit:
www.retrospectensemble.com

soloist he has appeared at the Cheltenham International Festival; Handel Festival, Halle; Enescu Festival, Bucharest; Ottawa International Chamber Festival; Lamèque Festival; New Brunswick and Bermuda Festival.

As Artistic Director of The King's Consort he appeared in many of Europe's leading festivals and concert venues (most recently Concertgebouw, Amsterdam; La Cité de la Musique, Paris; and Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels) and broadcast extensively both on television and radio. His recently-released world premiere recording of Handel's 'Parnasso in Festa' for the Hyperion record label met with great critical acclaim. In addition to his work with Retrospect Ensemble and The King's Consort, he has conducted numerous other period-instrument ensembles, such as The English Concert, Portland Baroque Orchestra, and Holland Baroque Society.

Matthew recently made important conducting débuts with the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, Hessischer Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Norrköping Symphony Orchestra and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Dublin. Matthew is also active in the opera world as a freelance conductor and chorus master, working regularly at De Nederlandse Opera and the Nationale Reisopera in The Netherlands, the Komische Oper in Berlin and the Bayerische Staatsoper, as well as with English Touring Opera and New Chamber Opera. He was a tutor at St Peter's College Oxford and taught harpsichord at Oxford University. Matthew is also a tutor for the European Union Baroque Orchestra and regularly teaches on summer schools and courses such as the Jerusalem Early Music Workshop and the Dartington International Summer School. Engagements in 2009 include conducting debuts with the Iceland Symphony, Ulster Orchestra and Hamburger Symphoniker as well as new productions of Rinaldo (Central City Opera, Colorado) and Floridante (International Handel-Festspiele, Halle).

Matthew Halls plays a copy of a Grimaldi harpsichord (after originals in Nürnberg Museum) by Malcolm Greenhalgh (1989). The organ is a single-stop chamber organ – belonging to the European Union Baroque Orchestra – built by Ken Tickell in 1990.



Sonata I in B minor

- ① I Adagio 0.48
- ② II Canzona 1.20
- ③ III Largo 2.11
- ④ IV Vivace 2.02

Sonata II in E-flat major

- ⑤ I Adagio 1.26
- ⑥ II Canzona: Allegro .. 2.07
- ⑦ III Adagio 1.38
- ⑧ IV Largo 1.00
- ⑨ V Allegro 1.07

Sonata III in A minor

- ⑩ I Grave 1.28
- ⑪ II Largo 1.31
- ⑫ III Adagio 1.18
- ⑬ IV Canzona 1.20
- ⑭ V [Allegro] Grave 1.33

Sonata IV in D minor

- ⑮ I Adagio 2.09
- ⑯ II Canzona 1.26
- ⑰ III Adagio 0.51
- ⑱ IV Vivace 1.51
- ⑲ V Largo 2.00

Sonata V in G minor

- ⑳ I [...] 1.45
- ㉑ II Canzona 1.05
- ㉒ III Largo 2.43
- ㉓ IV Adagio 0.44
- ㉔ V Presto 0.16
- ㉕ VI Allegro 1.29
- ㉖ VII Adagio 0.33

Sonata VI in G minor

- ㉗ I Adagio 7.11

Sonata VII in C major

- ㉘ I Vivace 1.03
- ㉙ II Largo 1.09
- ㉚ III Grave 0.37
- ㉛ IV Canzona 1.29
- ㉜ V Allegro 1.36
- ㉝ VI Adagio 0.53

Sonata VIII in G minor

- ㉞ I Adagio 1.49
- ㉟ II Canzona 1.22
- ㊱ III Grave 0.38
- ㊲ IV Largo 3.16
- ㊳ V Vivace 0.34

Sonata IX in F major

- ㊴ I [...] 1.03
- ㊵ II Adagio 1.19
- ㊶ III Canzona: Allegro .. 1.50
- ㊷ IV Grave 1.15
- ㊸ V Allegro 1.22

Sonata X in D major

- ㊹ I Adagio 1.17
- ㊺ II Canzona: Allegro .. 1.32
- ㊻ III Grave 1.19
- ㊼ IV Largo 0.50
- ㊽ V Allegro 0.56

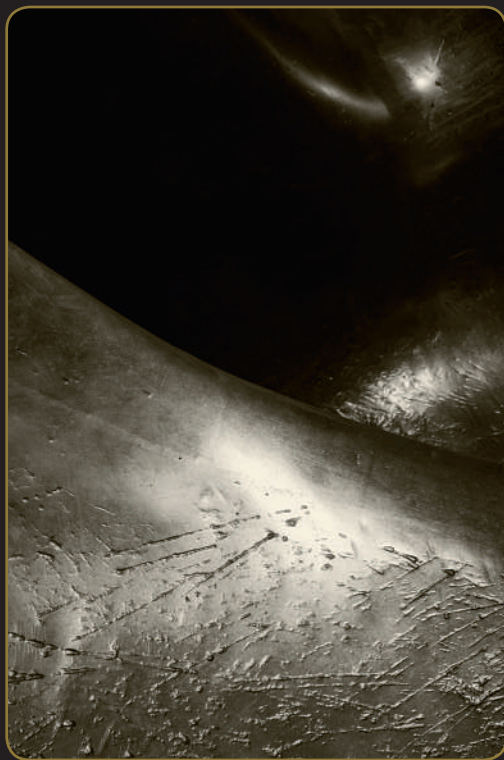
TOTAL TIME: 73.16

Sophie Gent

Violin 1: Sonatas 1, 3, 4, 5 & 9

Matthew Truscott

Violin 1: Sonatas 2, 6, 7, 8 & 10



Europe's leading early music ensembles, as a chamber music partner in repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to the Romantic, and as viola da gamba soloist with the Vienna Philharmonic.

Jonathan Manson may be heard on over 60 recordings, including a critically acclaimed disc of Rameau's *Pièces de clavecin en concert* with Trevor Pinnock and Rachel Podger, and Vivaldi's Concerto for two cellos with Yo-Yo Ma. His recording of the Bach sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord, together with Trevor Pinnock, has recently been released on the Avie label, and was hailed by Classic FM magazine as 'superb'. He is also active as a teacher, and has taught on courses in Hong Kong, Germany, Israel, the Czech Republic, America, Portugal and Iceland, as well as closer to home, at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Jonathan lives near London, where he is a professor at the Royal Academy of Music.

Jonathan Manson gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Benslow Musical Instrument Loan Scheme, who kindly lent the 1712 Barak Norman bass viol used in this recording. For more information about their important charitable work, please go to www.benslow.org/instrument-loan-scheme.php

MATTHEW HALLS *harpsichord/organ*

Matthew Halls is one of Britain's most exciting young conductors as well as a leading harpsichordist and organist. He was Associate Director (2005-2007) and Artistic Director (2007-2009) of The King's Consort before taking up his current position as Artistic Director of Retrospect Ensemble. He studied at Oxford University, was organ scholar and later assistant organist at New College and graduated with a first-class degree in music. Whilst completing postgraduate research at Oxford he was also director of music at the University Church in Oxford. In 1998 he joined the European Union Baroque Orchestra, with whom he toured extensively throughout Europe and the Middle East. Since leaving this orchestra he has enjoyed a busy and exciting career, playing with many of the world's leading period instrument orchestras, including the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Les Arts Florissants, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Academy of Ancient Music, the Theatre of Early Music, Montreal and the New York Collegium. As a

MATTHEW TRUSCOTT *violin*

Matthew Truscott studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, the Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague and in Bloomington, Indiana where his teachers were Erich Gruenberg, Simon Standage, Vera Beths and Mauricio Fuchs. He now shares his time between period instrument performance and 'modern' chamber music, appearing with some of the finest musicians in both fields.

As a soloist and director Matthew has appeared with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Konzerthaus Vienna and London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, as well as with The King's Consort at Wigmore Hall on numerous occasions.

Recently appointed as one of the leaders of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, other engagements as concertmaster have included projects with English National Opera, The English Concert, The King's Consort, Dutch National Opera and the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra. He is leader of St James' Baroque, the Classical Opera Company and the Magdalena Consort. Matthew is professor of baroque violin at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Matthew Truscott plays a Rogeri violin from 1704, kindly on loan from Simon Smewing.

JONATHAN MANSON *bass viol*

Jonathan Manson pursues a varied international career as a performer on both cello and viola da gamba. He was born in Edinburgh and received his formative training at the International Cello Centre in Scotland under the direction of Jane Cowan, later going on to study with Steven Doane at the Eastman School of Music in New York. A growing fascination for early music led him to Holland, where he studied viola da gamba with Wieland Kuijken.

While still a student, he became a founding member of the viol quartet Phantasm, which has since toured worldwide and earned several record prizes, including Gramophone Awards in both 1997 and 2004. In 1999, he was appointed principal cellist of the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, with whom he has since performed and recorded more than 150 Bach cantatas. He has also appeared as guest principal with many of

Henry Purcell **Ten Sonatas in Four Parts**

The two sets of sonatas composed by Henry Purcell provide a fascinating insight into the cosmopolitan and often conflicting stylistic tastes of English musicians in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Whilst musical tastes at court still leaned very much towards the French models, with a particular penchant for 'theatrical musick' and the 'French air in song', English tastes at large were being challenged by the arrival on the London scene of several notable Italian violin virtuosi. This influx of Italian influences exposed the art of solo violin virtuosity to an astonished and – at times – altogether bemused English audience of connoisseurs and amateurs. On the one hand there were conservatives such as Thomas Mace, whose nostalgic fondness for the traditional string band repertoire led to a feeling of general uneasiness towards the new fashions of soloistic violin playing. Despite his public moanings about the latest assaults on his musical ear and his none-too-affectionate references to 'Scoulding Violins' there were others, such as Roger North, who were altogether more enthusiastic about the arrival of the new Italian style. In marked contrast to Mace, he openly praised the talents of the latest Italian import, Nicolas Matteis, describing him as an "excellent musician" with a "singular" and "surprising" manner – judging the Italian virtuoso to have been second only to the great Arcangelo Corelli. Not surprising then that we discover North to have been one of 'that company which introduc't the Italian composed entertainments of musick which they call Sonatas'. Of greater interest though is the fact that Henry Purcell himself participated in such musical gatherings in the company of these English musical Italophiles. His own remarks in the preface to the 1683 set of sonatas affirm a certain desire to promote the novelties of the Italian style.

'Instead of an elaborate harange on the beauty and the charms of Musick (which after all the learned Encomiasts that words can contrive, commends it Self best by the performance of a skilful hand, and an angelical voice): I shall Say but a very few things by way of Preface, concerning the following Book, and its Author: for its Author, he has faithfully endeavour'd

a just imitation of the most fam'd Italian Masters; principally, to bring the seriousness and gravity of that Sort of Musick into vogue, and the reputation among our Countrymen, whose humour, 'tis time now, should begin to loath the levity, and balladry of our neighbours: The attempt he confesses to be bold, and daring, there being Pens and Artists of more eminent abilities, much better qualify'd for the imployment than his, or himself, which he well hopes these his weak endeavours, will in due time provoke, and enflame to a more accurate undertaking. He is not asham'd to own his unskilfulness in the Italian Language; but that's the unhappiness of his Education, which cannot justly be accounted his fault, however he thinks he may warrantably affirm, that he is not mistaken in the power of the Italian Notes, or elegancy of their Compositions, which he would recommend to the English Artists. There has been neither care, nor industry wanting, as well in contriving, as revising the whole Work; which had been abroad in the world much Sooner, but that he has now thought fit to cause the whole Thoroug Bass to be Engraven, which was a thing quite besides his first Resolutions. It remains only that the English Practitioner be enform'd, that he will find a few terms of Art perhaps unusual to him, the Chief of which are these following: Adagio and Grave, which import nothing but a very slow movement: Presto Largo, Poco Largo, or Largo by it Self, a middle movement: Allegro, and Vivace, a very brisk, Swift, or fast movement: Piano, Soft. The Author has no more to add, but his hearty wishes, that his Book may fall into no other hands but theirs who carry Musical Souls about them; for he is willing to flatter himself into a believe, that with Such his labours will Seem neither unpleasant, nor unprofitable.'

Setting aside for a moment this written endorsement of the Italian style, what makes Purcell's sonatas so remarkable is the way in which the composer synthesizes the most appealing ingredients of both the French and Italian styles, whilst not neglecting completely his English heritage and the harmonic curiosities of the indigenous consort style - homebred traditions very much in evidence in his earlier set of consort Fantazias. The most obvious English precursors to Purcell's sonatas are the works of Ferrabosco and Coprario ("Cooper" to his friends!). Although generically French 'suites' they are scored *alla maniera Italiana* for SSB and organ. Drawing heavily upon the traditions of the English fantasia style, John Jenkins and William Young reveal through their



RETROSPECT TRIO

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This recording marks the debut of Retrospect Trio, an exciting new chamber group formed under the umbrella of the larger Retrospect brand in order to focus specifically on the rich and varied trio sonata repertoire of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The four members of the group are all distinguished international performers in their own right with a shared passion for historically-informed music-making. This recording marks the first in a two-disc series exploring the timeless beauty of Henry Purcell's sonatas, marking the 350th anniversary of the celebrated English composer's birth.

SOPHIE GENT violin

Sophie Gent was born in Perth, Western Australia. After completing a Bachelors degree she pursued further studies at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague with Ryo Terakado, completing her Masters degree with distinction in 2005. In 2002 she was awarded first prize in two chamber music competitions: the International Van Wassenaer Competition (The Netherlands) and the International Premio Bonporti Concorsi (Italy), with the ensemble Opera Quarta. Their first recording, a disc of trio sonatas by J.M Leclair, was awarded a Diapason d'Or in July 2007. Sophie is active as a soloist and chamber musician, performing and recording frequently as concertmaster with the Ricercar Consort, Il Gardellino, Capriccio Stravagante, Les Muffatti, Ensemble Masques and as also member of the period instrument string quartet Mito Dell'arco, based in Japan. She was invited to teach at the Jerusalem Early Music Workshop in 2007, and regularly coaches chamber music at the Early Music Department Conservatorium in Antwerp. Recent recordings include Harp Consorts by William Lawes, and Concerti Grossi by J.C Pez with Les Muffatti.

Sophie Gent plays on a violin by Januarius Gagliano from 1732, kindly on loan from The Jumpstart Jr. Foundation.

SOPHIE GENT



MATTHEW TRUSCOTT



JONATHAN MANSON



MATTHEW HALLS

compositions a sense of harmonic daring which was to become one of the most appealing and essential ingredients of Purcell's own sonatas. Matthew Locke (Purcell's teacher) must also be mentioned as a significant stylistic influence on the young composer. In fact we hear already in the jagged dotted rhythms of the opening bars of the first sonata on this recording a style which is immediately recognisable and strangely reminiscent of Locke's unique and rhythmically-quirky musical language.

Purcell wrote twenty-two sonatas in total and they have been passed down to us in two published collections. The publication of the first set of twelve *Sonata's of III Parts* (1683) was overseen by the composer himself. As we have already seen above, the composer writes in the preface that he has 'faithfully endeavour'd a just imitation of the most fam'd Italian Masters'. Apart from capitalising on the obvious advantages (in marketing terms) of making explicit the Italian connection amongst his own musical circles, Purcell alludes to a significant degree of personal exposure to Italian repertoire that has fascinated scholars engaged in the search for more specific compositional models. Although we cannot say with complete certainty what the specific Italian models might have been - we know that he was aware of Colista's music and that sonatas by the likes of Cazzati, Vitali, Corelli and Bassani were available in London at that time - it is worth pointing out that one of the reasons we find it difficult to locate the 'originals' is because the musical voice of the 'imitator' is always the most immediately recognisable in the so-called 'imitations'!

The second set of *Ten Sonatas in Four Parts* first came into circulation in 1697 (two years after Purcell's death), with a preface by his widow. There is much to suggest that, despite the posthumous date of publication, these sonatas were already well-known. His widow writes of them as 'having already found many Friends'. It is most likely however - given the experimental nature of the musical style - that this later set contains earlier works than the 1683 publication and was probably compiled from extant instrumental parts. From Playford's advertisement of the 1697 collection we learn that the bass string part was written for the bass viol rather than the bass violin and that the particular choice



of keyboard instrument was apparently left open to the discretion of the performer. The importance of the bass viol's contribution to the general musical discourse is such that we should view these sonatas within the sonata 'a tre' tradition – predominantly a contrapuntal form derived from the early seventeenth-century canzona – as opposed to the more fashionable 'a due' style of Purcell's immediate Italian contemporaries. Why then the numerical discrepancy between the title of the first set and the second set?

It is clear from remarks in the preface to the 1683 set that the composer's earliest intention was to publish three separate-part books on the understanding that the keyboard player would realise a simplified version of the bass line, in line with common practices of the day. With the arrival in London of several important new continental publications, Purcell clearly changed his mind and decided to follow the latest publishing trends by preparing a separate (fourth) part for the keyboard continuo player. It would seem his publisher, Playford, was happier not to be burdened during the late stages of preparation with the arduous task of altering the engraving of the title page to reflect this new vogue, leading to the apparent ambiguity. Despite the discrepancy, both sets of sonatas contained four part books – for two violins, bass viol and organ or harpsichord.

Purcell's sonatas are remarkable for many reasons but not least for the dense and closely-wrought contrapuntal interplay that characterises many of the faster sections. Indeed it is through the richness of the polyphony and the sheer inventiveness of the melodic invention that we find the essence of the composer's musical voice. To this list of defining stylistic characteristics we should also add the composer's obvious and exquisite fascination with bitter-sweet harmonic progressions and the often almost unbearable boldness of his dissonance treatment as important hallmarks of Purcell's compositional style.

Judging by the surviving sales figures, Purcell's sonatas appear to have been only moderately successful in their own day. Only Sonata IX achieved real popularity in the

18th Century – republished in 1704 as 'That Excellent Sonata in F...call'd The Golden Sonata'. As to why it may have been nicknamed in this fashion, scholars have pointed out the possible links with Bertali's *Sonata Taussett Gulden* or Vitali's *La Guidoni* (1669) – both in F major and based on the same triadic patterns one finds at the head of Purcell's sonata.

Whatever the reasons for the waning popularity of these sonatas in previous centuries, they continue to delight and enthrall both performers and listeners alike today. They stand as wonderful examples of the composer's innate gift for assimilating the styles and trends of the French, Italian and English schools. This ability, coupled with his great flair for writing counterpoint led to the emergence of a truly individual musical language, charged with unusual and exotic dissonances and strikingly abrupt melodic changes of direction. Leaving the composer to have the final word, he once wrote of his art:

'Musick is but in its nonage; a forward child, which gives hope of what is maybe hereafter in England, when the masters of it shall find more encouragement. 'Tis now learning Italian, which is its best master, and a little of the French air to give it somewhat more gayety and fashion. Thus, being further from the sun we are of later growth than our neighbouring countries, and must be content to shake off our barbarity by degrees.' [!]

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