

44th Innsbruck Festival of Early Music

14 July – 30 August 2020

In 2020, the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music will present well-known opera figures in the barely known works by Ferdinando Paër ("Leonora") and Alessandro Melani ("L'empio punito"), as well as the intermedii to "La Pellegrina". The great countertenor Franco Fagioli, among others, will be celebrating his concert debut, whilst the harpsichordist Christophe Rousset, the Consort of the Freiburger Baroque Orchestra and the Accademia Bizantina will be performing once more in Innsbruck.

Fidelio, Don Giovanni, Apollo – although these famous opera characters will not be missing at the Innsbruck Festival in 2020, they will not appear in the famous works of Beethoven, Mozart and Cavalli, but in some rarely known gems such as "**Leonora**", an opera by Ferdinando Paër, in which the heroic wife of Florestan frees her husband from the captivity of the tyrant Pizarro. The opera premièred one year before the first version of Beethoven's "Fidelio" in Dresden. At the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music, Artistic Director Alessandro De Marchi will revive this immediate predecessor work in the Beethoven Year 2020. "Leonora" was one of 50 operas by the experienced composer Paër who was very successful during his lifetime. Today, he is – unjustly – broadly forgotten, along with his musically enthralling "Leonora" and all his other operas. Opera director Mariame Clément, who can look back on a long list of successes from the Bregenz Festival to Glyndebourne, is staging three performances at the Tyrolean State Theatre. The Cesti Competition award winner Arianna Vendittelli, who caused quite a furore in 2019 at the Innsbruck Festival with the "Merope" opera, will take on the role of Leonora. De Marchi is conducting the Innsbrucker Festwochenorchester (Festival Orchestra). "Leonora" is a co-production with the Beethovenfest (Beethoven Festival) in Bonn and the Schwetzingen Festival (Schwetzingen SWR Festspiele).

In contrast to the noble heroine Leonora, another rediscovery at the 2020 festival is about one of the darkest heroes in the history of opera. 120 years before Mozart's "Don Giovanni", the Italian Alessandro Melani composed the music to the theatrical material of the Spanish monk Tirso de Molina about this nefarious seducer. Melani's opera, first performed in Rome in 1669, bears the title "L'empio punito" ("The punished godless"). The wonderful melodic opera style featuring one arioso after another fits in well with Innsbruck, as it brings strong reminiscences of the opera music by the local court composer Pietro Antonio Cesti. Under the direction of conductor Mariangiola Martello, the best singers of the Cesti Competition 2019 will perform this first Don Giovanni of the opera history in the courtyard of the Faculty of Theology with this Barockoper:Jung production.

Even before the opera was "invented", scenic musical intermedii for the performances of theatre plays were highly fashionable at the Medici court in Florence. Giulio Caccini, Jacopo Peri and Emilio de



'Cavalieri, the pioneers who later created the first operas about ancient Greek matters, were already composing wonderful mini-operas as interludes for the comedy **"La pellegrina"**, which was performed in the Uffizi Palace in 1589. Apollo, the God of Muses, was one of the main characters in these intermezzi on "Power" and "Influence of Music on Humanity". 400 years after the premier, these intermedii will be revived at the Innsbruck Festival in all their mythological power and musical splendour – interpreted by outstanding musicians such as Eduardo Egüez and his ensemble La Chimera, the madrigalists of Coro Voz Latina and the Tyrolean NovoCanto choir, as well as gifted soloists, led by the award-winning soprano Alicia Amo.

Who's afraid of Baroque?

In July and August 2020, the concert audience can look forward to skilful, high ranking and well-known artists. In the Ambras Castle concerts, the Spanish ensemble Al Ayre Español will be performing the trio sonatas by Handel and Corelli. Café Zimmermann invites you to enjoy a range of delicious chamber music delicacies; the Concerto Scirocco ensemble will be presenting a thrilling program with dances from the Shakespearean period and harpist Margret Köll will then revive the «Madrigali secreti» from Ferrara together with her fellow musicians.

The star countertenor Franco Fagioli will enter the concert stage of the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music for the first time and will perform arias from Leonardo Vinci and Georg Friedrich Händel at the Tyrolean State Theatre, accompanied by the renowned Baroque ensemble Il pomo d'oro. The harpsichordist Christophe Rousset will be returning to Innsbruck and perform in a concert entitled "From Purcell with Love" with a chamber formation of his ensemble Les Talens Lyriques and the winner of the Cesti Competition 2019, British mezzo-soprano Grace Durham. Following the revival of Cesti's opera "La Dori" at the last Festival of Early Music, the Accademia Bizantina is returning to Innsbruck under the direction of Ottavio Dantone. The musicians will dedicate themselves to Vivaldi and love in the Riesensaal (Giants' Hall) of the Hofburg (Imperial Palace) together with the French contralto Delphine Galou. It is not Vivaldi's, but rather Giovanni Antonio Guido's, "Four Seasons" that is bringing the Diderot Ensemble with the South Tyrolean Baroque violinist Johannes Pramsohler to Innsbruck. These "other seasons" are composed for three violin solo parts and correspond more closely to the French suite than to the Italian concerto. The musicians of the French Agamemnon ensemble were inspired by Archduke Ferdinand's Wunderkammer (Cabinet of Wonders) at Ambras Castle. Acoustic treasures will be presented by the young musicians in a concert in the Spanish Hall. We will also meet French musicians in the Open Mind concert in 2020. The Curious Bards will be reviving Irish and Scottish folk music from the Baroque period under the auspicious title of "By Moonlight on the Green". Baroque violinist Kinga Ujszászi and lutenist Jadran Duncumb will be performing music from "Assassini, Assassinati" ("The assassins and the assassinated!") – but in the protected atmosphere of Nikolauskapelle (Chapel of St. Nicholas), this title doesn't have to scare you. Meanwhile, Thomas Dunford invites you to listen to his lute and will be interpreting solo works from Bach for lute.



At an open-air concert in the courtyard of the Faculty of Theology, countertenor and ballet dancer Vincenzo Capezzuto poses a question that the Innsbruck audience will surely negate loudly: "Who's afraid of Baroque?"

The Cesti Singing Competition enters a new decade. Following the top-class competition 2019, you can again look forward to highly talented young singers in the eleventh run of the competition. The final concert is the end of the Festival, when the finalists prepare arias from the opera "Boris Goudenow" by Johann Mattheson.

Church music highlights

In the Stiftskirche Wilten Church, – together with mezzo-soprano Marianne Beate Kielland and countertenor Christophe Dumaux – the Freiburger BarockConsort will be performing one of the most soulful sacred works – Pergolesi's Stabat Mater. Another highlight of church music, Beethoven's Mass in C major, will be put in the spotlight in the Beethoven anniversary year 2020 by Alessandro De Marchi in Cathedral of St. James. With Laura Aikin, Anke Vondung, Julian Prégardien and Georg Nigl, he can count on a renowned ensemble of singers. The lutenist Michele Passotti and his fellow musicians from La fonte musica will be performing works from two of the most significant late medieval composers in the church courtyard – Matteo da Perugia and Antonio "Zacara" da Teramo. Swiss vocal ensemble Voces Suaves will be taking listeners to Baroque Rome, reviving some of composer Giacomo Carissimi's pieces such as his heart-rending oratorio "Historia di Jephthe".

Innsbruck hulled in Early Music

Following the successful premiere at the last Festival, the Festival's programme includes three surprise concerts once again. The locations are fixed, and the programme and artists will remain secret until the start of the concert. Young visitors can explore the world of string instruments in the "Saitenweise" children's concert. In 2020, the violin-making workshop with Claudia Unterkofler will be offered to not only children, but also to adults. Young and old alike can once again look forward to Baroque music throughout the city at the Festival's Concerto Mobile performs at courtyards, cafes, bookstores and underneath shady trees. The Schlossfest Ambras (Ambras Renaissance Day) remains a fixed point and this year will be providing a colourful programme for the whole family for the 26th time.

Further inquiries:

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