



*Press Release (long) – 43rd Innsbruck Festival of Early Music
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16 July to 27 August 2019

Shining Lights

The commemorative year of Emperor Maximilian I, the 350th anniversary of Innsbruck court musician Pietro Antonio Cesti's death and the tenth instalment of the Cesti Competition are the focal points of the 43rd Innsbruck Festival of Early Music. Shining lights from days past and present will radiate with a fresh sparkle in the summer of 2019. The rediscovery of the baroque opera "Merope" by Riccardo Broschi is eagerly anticipated. The Innsbruck audience can look forward to stars of the early music scene – from Bejun Mehta to Julia Lezhneva, from the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin to the La Folia baroque orchestra.

With the rediscovery of the opera "**La Merope**", composed by Riccardo Broschi for his brother, the famous singer Farinelli, the Innsbruck Festival sheds light on an era in operatic history on which the castrato singer's brilliant voice left an indelible mark. Thanks to excellent vocal technique, today's countertenors have mastered the repertoire of that time. Three of them will sing parts in "Merope" in Innsbruck: David Hansen, Hagen Matzeit and Filippo Mineccia. Festival Director Alessandro De Marchi will conduct the Innsbruck Festival Orchestra for the first time in "Merope". The newly established orchestra unites specialists in historically informed performance practice, many of whom have already played with other ensembles at the Festival. In addition to the rousing music, dance also plays an important part in the Innsbruck production. As was customary in the baroque period, each act contains dance scenes, the music to which was provided by separate composers and orchestras. At the time of "Merope's" world première, the French dance style prevailed in Turin, which is why De Marchi opted for dance music by the French composer and dancer Jean-Marie Leclair. The opera will be directed by Sigrid T'Hoof, a specialist in historically informed performances and baroque dance choreographies.

Festival celebrates Pietro Antonio Cesti

In 2019, the music world remembers the singer and composer Pietro Antonio Cesti. The Italian artist, who died 350 years ago, spent more than a decade at the Innsbruck court and wrote many operas there. In doing so, he turned the first opera house north of the Alps into a centre of Venetian opera outside Italy. Revivals of several of Cesti's operas were produced over the years at the Festival, only the tragicomedy "**La Dori**" has been waiting to be rediscovered until now. It will be staged at the Festival in the Cesti year of 2019. A specialist in baroque and Classical opera, Ottavio Dantone has been engaged by such renowned institutions as La Scala in Milan, the Glyndebourne Festival and the Salzburg Festival. He will direct "Dori's" renaissance after more than three centuries on the Innsbruck opera stage, conducting his exquisite historically informed ensemble Accademia Bizantina. The main



parts will be sung by successful participants of the Cesti Competition, including soprano Emőke Baráth and tenor Bradley Smith.

The singing competition named after Cesti, which is held in the scope of Festival, celebrates an anniversary in 2019 as well: set up ten years ago by Alessandro De Marchi, it has developed into one of the world's leading platforms for young singers in the field of baroque opera. Lots of former participants have established themselves internationally. Many of them can be found in the 2019 Festival programme. The winners of the previous three years' competitions, for example, will perform in a "Gala of Winners" at Ambras Castle.

The 2019 Baroque Opera:Young presents the next generation of talented singers of last year's competition in Handel's "**Ottone, Rè di Germania**". "Ottone" was one of Handel's most successful and most performed operas during his lifetime. A sensational meeting of Handel's prima donnas Cuzzoni and Durastanti as well as the castrato Senesino with the competition's star, the incomparable castrato Farinelli, took place in London. Senesino retained the title role of Ottone, while Farinelli sang the part of Ottone's scheming opponent Adelberto. Not only did two castrato legends thus "clash" in "Ottone" but, in terms of the opera's plot, so did the cultures of the two Roman Empires: Byzantium in the east and Rome in the west.

Treasures from the time of Emperor Maximilian

On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Emperor Maximilian I's death, the 2019 Festival opens a treasure chest filled with music by Habsburg court musicians such as Heinrich Isaac and Paul Hofhaimer. The Innsbruck Festival dedicates a concert to the legendary meeting of Maximilian's Burgundian and Austrian court orchestras in Innsbruck in 1503, featuring Cinquecento, the Dufay Ensemble and Cappella Mariana, three of the most exciting vocal ensembles of our time. More musical gems from the time of Emperor Maximilian await discovery in other Festival concerts – at Ambras Castle, in the Court Church and the collegiate churches of Stams and Wilten. The youngest music enthusiasts can immerse themselves in the world of the Habsburgs and find out about the music of that era in a children's concert.

Opening in the Spanish Hall

The Festival summer starts in July with the Ambras Castle Concerts. Those attending can look forward to violinist Mayah Kadish, who returns to Innsbruck with her main ensemble La Vaghezza after her acclaimed performance with the Kavka ensemble at last year's Festival. The young Seconda Pratica group of musicians presents its new programme "Nova Europa", featuring masterpieces from European and Latin American archives and collections, in the Spanish Hall. Enrico Onofri and his Imaginarium Ensemble bring along an "early music" classic on their visit to Innsbruck: Vivaldi's "Four Seasons". Last but not least, countertenor Terry Wey and the Hofkapelle München devote an entire evening to cantatas and concertos by Johann Sebastian Bach.



Sacred and secular concert highlights

The musicians of the Trompeten Consort Innsbruck – the only one of its kind in the world today – and soloists from the Bavarian Radio Chorus will open the new Festival season's series of sacred-music performances with the Introitus concert in Stams under the direction of Howard Arman. Alessandro De Marchi will conduct Handel's oratorio "Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno" in 2019. For the performance in Innsbruck Cathedral, the artistic director of the Festival can draw on rising and established singing stars, including Canadian soprano Karina Gauvin and Austrian mezzo-soprano Sophie Rennert.

Internationally acclaimed singers, soloists and ensembles will perform in festive settings in the Giant Hall at the Imperial Palace, in the Spanish Hall at Ambras Castle and in the Great Hall at the new House of Music in Innsbruck. Countertenor Valer Sabadus, a favourite with the audience, will present arias by Porpora, Caldara and Handel. Soprano Robin Johannsen and the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin devote themselves to Johann Sebastian Bach and his musical wanderings to Italy. German flutist Dorothee Oberlinger will play one of Vivaldi's most beautiful and most virtuoso flute concertos: "Il Gardellino". The young Russian soprano Julia Lezhneva has already delighted audiences at the major opera houses of the world with her "angelic voice" (New York Times). In 2019, she makes her debut at the Innsbruck Festival in the Giant Hall at the Imperial Palace. The concert programme's crowning glory is an evening featuring Bejun Mehta, "currently probably actually the best countertenor in the world" (Süddeutsche Zeitung), ten years after his first guest performance at the Innsbruck Festival. Mehta will sing arias from Handel's opera "Giulio Cesare in Egitto" in the new concert hall at the Innsbruck House of Music. He will be accompanied by the La Folia baroque orchestra, which ranks among the most spectacular historically informed orchestras today.

Promenade Concert, flamenco and surprise concerts

The Promenade Concerts hand over to the Innsbruck Festival: the historically informed Tiroler Barockinstrumentalisten orchestra will play the season's final Promenade Concert in a joint evening event in the courtyard of the Imperial Palace. Outdoor music, which already existed in the days of the baroque, accords splendidly with both brass music and historically informed performance practice, a notable example being Handel's famous "Water Music".

Many music genres have their roots in the baroque period. The "Open Mind" concert held as part of the Festival confirms this every year. In 2019, singer Rocío Márquez, dancer Patricia Guerrero and the musicians of the Accademia del Piacere take the audience on a journey to the world of flamenco, from its baroque origins to contemporary interpretations.

The concert calendar full of shining lights is rounded off with a further anniversary: to celebrate the 350th birthday of the University of Innsbruck, the Festival presents three surprise concerts. The locations and dates will be revealed, the artists involved and the programme, however, remain secret until the beginning of each concert.

Tickets for the 2019 Innsbruck Festival of Early Music are available as of Wednesday, 28 November 2018.



Artist pictures are available for download from the Festival website at:
www.altemusik.at/presse

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