



Innsbruck Festival of Early Music – 2018 programme

17 July to 27 August 2018

42nd Innsbruck Festival of Early Music

Worlds in motion

In 2018, the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music takes the audience on a journey to highly regarded instrument makers, exceptional artists, gods and heroes as well as legendary composers. Establishing a connection between the musical worlds of five centuries, it presents each of them in a new light.

Where one opera world ends and another begins

Three opera worlds are represented at the 2018 Festival: early Venetian opera, the heyday of the Neapolitan opera and its grand finale in the Romantic period.

Artistic Director Alessandro De Marchi will conduct **“Didone abbandonata”** by Saverio Mercadante, the first ever early 19th-century opera to be staged at the Innsbruck Festival. This was the time of Bellini, Rossini and Donizetti, when bel canto was at its zenith. “The musical ideas of this period of Italian opera come to full effect only in historically informed performances”, De Marchi explains. “You can hear where one opera world ends and another begins.” “Didone” will be staged by one of the most renowned directors of our time, Jürgen Flimm. He was Artistic Director of the Salzburg Festival from 2006 to 2010 and took over the directorship of the Berlin State Opera Unter den Linden in 2010. The young Lithuanian soprano Viktorija Miškūnaitė will play Dido and the difficult part of Aeneas will be sung by Austrian mezzo-soprano Katrin Wundsam in a trouser role.

According to conductor and musicologist Claudio Osele, the serenata **“La Semele o sia La richiesta fatale”** (**“Semele or The Fatal Request”**) by Johann Adolf Hasse is “a gripping chamber piece”. Hasse’s “Semele” was first performed in Naples in 1726, allegedly featuring the famous castrato Farinelli. Serenatas were usually characterised by smaller instrumentations and didn’t require much stage technology. The singers will perform in costumes but without a set in Georg Quander’s production at the Festival. A rising star in the sky of the singers, Italian soprano Francesca Aspromonte, will sing the title



role. Further main parts will be performed by two other first-rate singers, Roberta Invernizzi and Sonia Prina.

The 2018 instalment of Barockoper:Jung takes us back to the time of the early Venetian opera: **“Gli amori d’Apollo e Dafne” (“The Love of Apollo and Daphne”)** by Francesco Cavalli is considered a masterpiece of the genre. Contrary to evidence from his later works, the young Cavalli was not yet committed to the rules and stylistic constraints of the opera form. He revelled in artistic freedom, composing dramatic episodes with seamless transitions between recitatives and arias, reality and illusion. The baroque world of shadows, dreams, and darkness inspired director Alessandra Premoli to stage a shadow play in the courtyard of the Faculty of Theology. All the parts will be sung by budding young singers from last year’s Cesti Competition. Dafne will be played by soprano Sara-Maria Saalman, who already enthused the Innsbruck audience back in 2014 in the Festival opera “Almira”.

The world of strings

The concerts in the atmospheric settings of Ambras Castle and the Imperial Palace are fixtures in every Festival season. Instrument maker Jacobus Stainer, who was born approx. 400 years ago, takes a prominent position in the programme for 2018. His string instruments were even more prized than Stradivari’s for a long time, and their unique sound is still revered today. Music from Stainer’s era features repeatedly in 2018’s programme, for instance in the form of composers who owned Stainer violins (Bach, Corelli) or knew him personally (Biber). Anna Fusek, the Armoniosa ensemble, the Accademia Ottoboni, Leila Schayegh and Ensemble Daedalus, who all perform at the 2018 Festival, are out-and-out specialists on their respective string instruments. The Stainer focus culminates in the “Das goldene Zeitalter” concert, in which all members of the Swiss casalQuartett will play on original instruments by Stainer. The Festival dedicates the opening of the Ambras Castle Concerts to a contemporary master instrument maker. In memory of Rudolf Tutz from Innsbruck, who died in 2017, close friends like flutist Barthold Kuijken and Linde Brunmayr-Tutz will perform in the Spanish Hall – exclusively on instruments by Rudolf Tutz.

Dawn of a new generation

The summer of 2018 will put a new “early music generation” in the limelight: young, spirited musicians as well as winners of the Cesti Competition, whose careers continue to progress, conquer the Festival stage. Emőke Baráth will sing arias from Arcadia, the land of dreams, in the Spanish Hall, accompanied by Tyrolean harpist Margret Köll. Suzanne Jerosme and Eric Jurenas will present beautifully sad songs at St



Nicholas Chapel, and French mezzo-soprano Lea Desandre will perform together with the outstanding Jupiter ensemble in the splendid Giant Hall at the Imperial Palace. The talented musicians of the Haller Streicherey are even younger still. In the “Concerto grosso”, the historically informed ensemble from Tyrol meets the internationally renowned Ensemble Diderot under the direction of South Tyrolean baroque violinist Johannes Pramsohler.

The world of sacred music

The opening of the church music branch of the Festival in Stams collegiate church is in the able hands of baroque specialist Diego Fasolis. In the Introitus, he will devote himself to a Mass by Palestrina with the excellent Coro della Radiotelevisione Svizzera and his ensemble I Barocchisti.

After the brilliant performance of “San Giovanni Battista” at the 2017 Festival, Alessandro De Marchi will present the duel between David and Goliath in St Jacob’s Cathedral in 2018: the oratorio “Davidis pugna et victoria” (“David’s Fight and Victory”) by Alessandro Scarlatti. De Marchi relies on a large choir and orchestration as well as established soloists, led by Arianna Vendittelli as David and Luigi de Donato as Goliath.

A special event awaits visitors eager for new discoveries at the Festival’s “Open Mind” concert. Composed in the 1960s, the “Misa criolla” will be performed in the Jesuit church. It is considered one of the most popular works of Christian music. In Innsbruck, Argentinian musician Eduardo Egüez and his ensemble La Chimera will combine the “Misa criolla” with early music from the Jesuit Reductions in South America, moving rhythms and catchy melodies.

Innsbruck Festival keeps on moving

The Festival of Early Music takes place not only in historical halls and churches but also in parks, on the streets and public squares of Innsbruck. Free lunch concerts in the Imperial Gardens, creative workshops and concerts for children make it easy to find one’s way into the world of early music. The Concerto Mobile presents an innovative new feature of the Festival: those interested can listen to lively folk dances from the baroque period in a historic tram of the Innsbruck public transport service.

For printable photos relating to all operas and concerts, please visit:

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