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The Italian Voyage

**J.S. Bach, Giuseppe Torelli, Antonio Vivaldi,
Benedetto Marcello, Alessandro Stradella**

Maryland Bach Aria Group

The Italian Voyage

THE MARYLAND BACH ARIA GROUP: Larry E. Vote, baritone; Jeff B. Silberschlag, trumpet; Deborah Greitzer, bassoon; Pamela Greitzer, cello; Jeanne Fryberger-Vote, harpsichord
Guest Artists: Yuval Waldman, violin; José Cueto, violin; Jennifer Rende, viola; Gail Kruvand, contrabass

1. J.S. Bach

“Wacht Auf” from Cantata No. 20 (2:46)

for baritone, trumpet, strings, and continuo

2. Giuseppe Torelli

Sonata in D (G.1) (8:43)

for trumpet, strings, and continuo

1. Andante (2:26)
2. Allegro (1:43)
3. Grave (2:39)
4. Allegro (1:43)

3. Antonio Vivaldi

Concerto “La Notte” (9:25)

for bassoon, strings, and continuo

1. Largo;Presto “I Fantasmì” (3:02)
2. Presto (:33)
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4. Allegro “Sorge L’Aurora” (3:38)

4. Benedetto Marcello

Salmo Decimoquinto (13:42)

for baritone, bassoon, cello, and continuo

1. Lento (2:33)
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6. Adagio (1:21)

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5. Alessandro Stradella

Sinfonia to the Serenata “Il Barcheggio” (9:57)

Suite for trumpet, strings, and continuo

1. Spiritosa e Staccata (1:48)
2. Andante (2:59)
3. Allegro (:38)
4. Allegretto—Corrente (1:21)
5. Canzone (1:24)
6. Allegro (1:37)

6. Benedetto Marcello

Sonata No. 5 (8:03)

for cello, bassoon, and continuo

1. Adagio (3:19)
2. Allegro (1:54)
3. Largo (:52)
4. Presto (1:52)

7. J.S. Bach

“Wacht Auf” from Cantata No. 110 (4:16)

for baritone, trumpet, strings, and continuo

Total Time — 57:23

As one of the greatest assimilators in the history of music, Johann Sebastian Bach made the compositions of the Italian high baroque a subject of special study. His fascination for all aspects of the Mediterranean art can be seen in the two arias found on this recording, **Wacht auf, verlorne Schaafe** and **Wacht auf, ihr Andern und ihr Glieder** from the Leipzig-period cantatas 20 (*O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort*) and 110 (*Unser Mund sei voll Lachens*) respectively. Both arias explore aspects of the concerted style made famous by composers like Giuseppe Torelli, Antonio Vivaldi, and Archangelo Corelli, particularly the creation of impassioned dialogue between two primary voices, in this case between the trumpet and bass soloist. *Wacht auf, verlorne Schaafe* features the idiomatic figures common in the works of Italian composers for trumpet, primarily triplets, dotted rhythms, and triadic themes in a predominantly major tonal panorama. It should be added that such arias by Bach require true virtuoso performances from both the trumpet and bass soloists. While *Wacht auf, ihr Andern und ihr Glieder* contains its share of brilliant moments, the aria incorporates a syncopated rhythmic pattern, first sounded in the opening ritornello, which suffuses the work with a motoric vitality equal to that found in any similar work by the Italian masters. Bach would not be Bach, however, if he did not

make his own special contributions: the wonderfully expressive vocal line, most notably his ecstatic setting of the work *Freudenlieder* (songs of praise) is an extraordinary example of baroque text painting at its best, revealing Bach's special talent for seizing upon important phrases or words and making the most of them.

A similar attention to the subtitles of musical composition can be seen in Vivaldi's popular concerto entitled **La Notte** (The Night), one of 39 (!) concertos for bassoon written by the composer. While it remains a mystery why Vivaldi had such an affinity for the bassoon (there is no biographical information which would indicate a special patron who commissioned these works), there can be no doubt that Vivaldi understood the instrument very well indeed. Although the familiar jocular quality of the bassoon is well evident, Vivaldi also composed a number of lyrical passages for it (best seen in the fourth movement, *Il sonno* (Slumber), an arrangement of the adagio from *Autumn* from *The Four Seasons*). Giuseppe Torelli's **Sonata in D** and Alessandro Stradella's **Sinfonia avanti il Barcheggio** are also masterpieces of the concerted tradition. The especially beautiful first movement of Torelli's work features the "sigh" motif so popular in the works of the Bologna school of the late century. The other three movements are also remarkable for

their elegance of counterpoint and melodic grace, particularly the final movement, a tour de force constructed over a three-measure ostinato figure. The compositional abilities of Stradella, a contemporary of Torelli and an important representative of the Bologna school, are well documented in his all too rarely played *Sinfonie*, music meant to precede a performance of his opera *Il Barchetto*, first produced in Genoa in 1681. The multi-movement work (here in a special arrangement of selected movements from the two *Sinfonie* made by Jeff Silberschlag) is a virtual compendium of creative devices which every baroque composer was expected to master. Because the trumpet is featured so prominently, the work might more properly be called a trumpet concerto with occasional orchestral interludes, but even such a designation would be problematic, as it would do little justice to the complex mixture of concerted styles which presages developments in the next century and demonstrates the composer's progressive nature.

Benedetto Marcello was another of the progressive figures who graced the Italian musical scene during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Famous today as the author of the bitter (but astonishingly funny) satire on operatic production, *Il teatro alla moda* (1722), Marcello was a gifted composer of instrumental and vocal music. His **Sonata**

for 2 viole da gamba (performed here with cello and bassoon) is in the typical four-movement format of the time (slow-fast-slow-fast), but contains a harmonic style and melodic grace which have more in common with the mid-century style of Stamitz and C.P.E. Bach than with the composers of the high baroque. Similarly advanced is the **Salmo Decimequinto**, a multi-movement cantata made up of expressive arias and expertly crafted recitatives which reveal the composer's talent for clear but powerful harmonic gestures. While the operas of Marcello are forgotten today, the *Salmo* reminds us that the composer was one of the masters of the bel canto vocal style of the baroque period.

*Notes by Dr. Donald R. Boomgaarden,
Associate Professor of Musicology,
St. Mary's College of Maryland*

Recording Engineer: David Hancock

Folder Design: Ed Mitchell

Photo: On the deck of the USS Constellation, built in 1854, named after (and composed of some materials from) the 1797 frigate which launched in Baltimore Harbor. (Guill Photo)

Harpisichord: Italian style single manual by David Sutherland (1990; Ann Arbor, Michigan)

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The Maryland Bach Aria Group, founded in 1988, is in residence at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Fanfare Magazine called the group's debut recording on Crystal Records in 1990 (CD704) "*a welcome addition to the recording world*" and hailed the performers as "*outstanding*." In 1991, the group won the Norton T. Dodge Prize for Creative and Scholarly Achievement. The group has maintained a heavy performing schedule including appearances at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall and at the Teatro Filharmonico of the Arena di Verona in Italy. In fact, the Verona concert, which received much critical acclaim, was the catalyst for this compact disc, *The Italian Voyage*, in which lesser known works of such Italian masters as Torelli, Marcello, Vivaldi, and Stradella combine with the group's signature Bach arias featuring baritone and trumpet.

Larry Edward Vote is currently Associate Professor of Music and Director of Vocal Activities at St. Mary's College of Maryland. An accomplished vocal soloist, he has performed throughout the United States and Europe. As a member of the Tidewater Ensemble he has been heard on concerts in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Jordan Hall in Boston, and the Arena di Verona in Italy. Of his performances with Voices of the Golden Age,

the Washington Post noted that "his reverberant reading of Bouvard's *Le Temple de Bacchus* filled this aria with so much nobility and fervor that some real life thunderbolts outside seemed anticlimactic."

Jeff Silberschlag has appeared as trumpet soloist throughout Europe, the United States, and Israel. His playing has been described as "compelling" by Germany's *Kölnische Rundschau*; "extraordinary" by Italy's *L'Arena*; and "outstanding" by *Fanfare Magazine*. Composers Morton Gould, William Thomas McKinley, and Robert Hall Lewis have written compositions especially for him. Silberschlag has held principal trumpet positions with the Italian Radio/Television Symphony Orchestra (RAI-Torino), New York City Opera—National Company, and the Jerusalem Symphony. He recorded as trumpet soloist two CDs in 1994 with Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony (Delos); one in January 1995 with the Czech Philharmonic (MMC); and in 1986 Bach's Brandenburg No. 2 for Eurovision Television. He has been on the faculty of St. Mary's College of Maryland since 1988.

Deborah Greitzer, bassoon, has been the Director of the Tidewater Ensemble since 1988, and a member of the ensemble since 1982. She began her musical studies at age

five with her mother, pianist Shirley Greitzer. She has been performing internationally since the age of 19, twice winning the Artists' International Prize for Chamber Music. She is a graduate of the Juilliard School and a recipient of the George Wellington Miles Award at Yale University, where she held a graduate fellowship. Greitzer has appeared as soloist with the Jerusalem Symphony, Hungarian Virtuosi, Richmond Symphony, and Ente Arena di Verona. She has held principal positions with the Jerusalem Symphony, New York City Opera—National Company, and the Madeira Bach Festival. In 1994 she recorded as a soloist with the Seattle Symphony, Gerard Schwarz, conductor. In addition to her work as a bassoonist, Greitzer was the featured narrator for three seasons at the Waterloo Festival's Children's Concerts, collaborating with her father, violist and conductor Sol Greitzer.

Pamela Greitzer, cello, recently completed her fourth tour of the Orient as a soloist with the New York Symphonic Ensemble. As a soloist and member of the Maryland Bach Aria Group, Riverside Piano Quartet, and Tidewater Ensemble, she performs throughout the United States and Europe. Her playing has been praised by Tim Page of *The New York Times* for its "patrician purity." She has held principal positions with Opera Northeast, the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra, the national tour of

Andrew Lloyd Weber, and the New York Symphonic Ensemble. She also performs with the American Ballet Theater Orchestra in New York. As a highly respected teacher of cello, Greitzer is currently on the faculties of Mannes Preparatory, School for Strings, C. W. Post, and the Collegiate School in New York. Prior to these appointments she served on the faculties of the Festival de Musique en Lorraine in France, and St. Mary's College of Maryland. Greitzer received her B.M. and M.M. from the Juilliard School and was a teaching assistant at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she was a full scholarship doctoral candidate.

Jeanne Fryberger Vote, harpsichord, was born into a family of musicians and educators and has pursued both of these professions. She has participated in masterclass seminars with Gustav Leonhardt and Edward Parmentier. As a member of Interact, a professional theater company based in Washington, D.C., she performed at the National Gallery of Art for the Treasure Houses of Great Britain exhibit and at the Smithsonian Institution in *A Dickens Christmas*. An accomplished ballet accompanist, she performed in the Netherlands with the Amsterdams Dance Academie. She is Assistant to the Provost for Continuing Education at St. Mary's College of Maryland and is the Music Director/Organist of historic Trinity Church (1638) in St. Mary's City.

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