

SERAFIN SUMMER MUSIC 2025

**SERAFIN ENSEMBLE
BACH AND BEYOND**

Wednesday, June 18, 2025, at 7pm
Lewes Public Library
111 Adams Avenue, Lewes, DE 19958

**Gina Perregrino, mezzo soprano; John Dee, oboe; Joseph Velez, clarinet
Kate Ransom and Julianne Murphy, violin; Amadi Azikiwe, viola
Jacques-Pierre Malan, cello; Gabriel Benton, harpsichord**

PROGRAM

Sonata in C Minor for Oboe and Continuo Georg Philipp Telemann
(1681-1767)
Largo – Vivace – Mesto – Vivace

Mr. Dee, Mr. Malan, Mr. Benton

“Dopo notte” from Ariodante HWV33 *and* Georg Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)
“Ombra mai fu” from Xerses

Ms. Perregrino, Ms. Ransom, Ms. Murphy, Mr. Azikiwe, Mr. Malan, Mr. Benton

From Suite for Solo Cello #3 in C Major, BWV 1009 Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)
Prelude and Gigue

Mr. Malan

Sonatas for Solo Harpsichord Domenico Scarlatti
(1685-1757)
Bb Major, K. 545; D Minor, K. 141; D Major, K. 492

Mr. Benton

From Trio Sonata in C Minor for Violin, Oboe and Continuo Georg Phillip Telemann
(1681-1767)
Andante; Allegro

Ms. Ransom, Mr. Dee, Mr. Malan, Mr. Benton

“Parto, parto” from La Clemenza di Tito Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Ms. Perregrino, Mr. Velez, Ms. Ransom, Ms. Murphy, Mr. Azikiwe, Mr. Malan

(This program is played without intermission and runs approximately 70 minutes)

***The Serafins thank Lewes Public Library and Coastal Concerts for their
co-sponsorship of this program.***

Program Notes

by Michael Redmond

Georg Philipp Telemann: Sonata in C Minor for Oboe and Continuo and Trio Sonata in C Minor for Violin, Oboe, and Continuo

One of the most prolific composers of all time, Telemann wrote some 3,000 works (about half of them have survived). He was more renowned in his day than Bach or Handel, his contemporaries, who knew him and highly respected his work. But time plays favorites, and Telemann's music fell into obscurity until a revival of interest in the 20th century.

There is a danger in a prolific output – the overshadowing of the best works by all the other works. “You know, I’ve written a lot of music,” Paul Hindemith once remarked to Otto Luening. “Yes, you certainly have,” Luening agreed. “And you know,” Hindemith continued, “80 percent of it is bad.” “Then why did you write it?” Luening asked. “Because without the 80 percent,” came the reply, “there would never have been the 20 percent.” (Richard Taruskin, in *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays*.)

Johann Sebastian Bach: Cello Suite No. 3 in C Major, BWV1009

It's amazing to consider that Bach's six suites for unaccompanied cello – “among the most profound of all classical music works” (Gary S. Dalkin) -- were little known and seldom performed until the great cellist Pablo Casals championed them in the early 20th century. But then, it's a tribute to Bach's singular genius that the music world is always “rediscovering” one aspect or another of his oeuvre as times and tastes change. It's as if his achievement is too monumental to take it all in, all at once.

The cello suites most likely date to circa 1720, when Bach was *kappelmeister* in Köthen, the same period during which he composed the equally awesome six partitas and sonatas for solo violin. Popular dances provided his template for these works.

Nanda Andries observes: “Polyphonic writing was the gold standard of the Baroque. There are essentially only two ways of creating polyphony on a solo violin or cello -- one can play two or more strings at once (‘double-‘ or ‘triple-stopping’) or in arpeggiation (as broken chords) ... The suites contain a great variety of technical devices, a wide emotional range, and some of Bach's most compelling voice interactions and conversations. It is their intimacy, however, that has made the suites amongst Bach's most popular works today.”

Domenico Scarlatti: Sonatas for solo harpsichord (Bb Major, K. 545; D Minor, K. 141; D Major, K. 492)

Music teacher to Portuguese and Spanish royalty, the Italian-born Domenico Scarlatti composed an astonishing 555 single-movement keyboard sonatas, or “exercises,” and was a celebrated virtuoso. The son of the important Neapolitan composer Alessandro Scarlatti, Domenico's music was influential in the development of the Classical style. In 1709 in Rome, he played against G.F. Handel in a keyboard contest and was judged the superior harpsichordist – while Handel was judged the superior organist.

Georg Friderich Handel *Ombra mai fu* from “Xerxes” and *Dopo notte* from “Ariodante”

“Commonly known as Handel's ‘Largo of Love,’ *Ombra mai fu* is the opening aria in the 1738 opera *Serse*. Sung by the character Xerxes I of Persia, the vocal part is composed for a countertenor. Perhaps the most striking element of this aria is the vocal range used, as it the high register for the countertenor creates an angelic atmosphere,” Alex Burns writes. Also striking is the depth of emotion Handel can plumb in such a short and simple piece.

Rated today as one of Handel's finest operas, "Ariodante" was premiered in 1735 and revived successfully in the 1960s, when Baroque opera was coming back into vogue following long obscurity. The joyous *Dopo notte*, originally performed by the famed castrato Giovanni Carestini, features astonishing vocal acrobatics and a huge range.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: "Parto, parto..." from La Clemenza di Tito

Premiered in 1791, the early sketches of Mozart's "La Clemenza di Tito" "seem to show that the role of Sesto was intended for a tenor. Mozart's impresario, however, had imported an important castrato from Italy, Domenico Bedini, and the composer showed once again his professional pragmatism by adapting," Bernard Holland writes.

The stunning *Parto, parto* starts slow and builds by faster tempos into a passionate virtuosic outburst. A solo clarinet part adds to the dramatic effect, shadowing the voice closely and with unusual prominence, almost like a duet partner.

"Playing in the orchestra for the opera was the virtuoso clarinetist Anton Stadler, for whom Mozart had written his 'Kegelstatt' Trio and Clarinet Quintet and for whom, he would very soon write his Clarinet Concerto ... (Stadler played) "with astonishing facility. Mozart featured his friend and his new instrument (basset clarinet) in this aria," Martin Pearlman writes.

Translations

DOPPO NOTTE (AFTER A NIGHT):

After a night so bleak and foreboding,
the sun shines forth in the heavens,
all the dearer, as the earth fills with joy.

For in the midst of a horrid storm,
my boat has been almost submerged,
but it grasps at the shore as it returns to port.

OMBRA MAI FU I (NEVER WAS A SHADE):

Never was a shade
of any plant,
dearer and more lovely,
or more sweet.

PARTO (I GO):

I go, but, my dearest,
make peace again with me.
I will be what you would most
have me be, do whatever you wish.

Look at me, and I will forget all
and fly to avenge you;
I will think only
of that glance at me.
Ah, ye gods, what power
you have given beauty!