



**NORTHSTAR**  
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## **HENRY PURCELL**

Symphony while the swans come forward



**La Sfera Armoniosa**

**Mike Fentross** conductor

**Johannette Zomer** soprano



SUPER AUDIO CD

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## HENRY PURCELL (1659-1695)

### **The Prophetess: or, The History of Dioclesian, Z.627** (1690)

[1] Symphony for trumpets and violins	2:00
[2] First music	2:20
[3] What shall I do to show how much I love her	3:53
[4] Butterfly dance	2:18
[5] Dance of Furies	3:00
[6] Since from my dear	4:29
[7] Tune for trumpets	0:56
[8] Canaries	1:13

### **The Indian Queen, Z.630** (1695)

[9] Air	1:34
[10] I attempt from love's sickness	1:51
[11] Hornpipe	0:48

### **King Arthur, Z.628** (1691)

[12] Overture	1:57
[13] First act tune	0:36
[14] Hornpipe	0:37
[15] Fairest Isle	5:21
[16] Trumpet tune	0:51
[17] St. George, the patron of our Isle	2:06
[18] Chaconne	3:04

### **The Fairy Queen, Z.629** (1692)

[19] Preludio	1:32
[20] Hornpipe	0:50
[21] Air	1:39
[22] Rondeau	1:32
[23] Symphony while the swans come forward	2:22
[24] If love's a sweet passion	5:23
[25] Symphony: Prelude, Canzona, Largo, Allegro, Adagio, Allegro	6:53
[26] Ye gentle spirits of the air	5:58
[27] Dance for the followers of Night	2:15
[28] See even Night herself is here	4:25
[29] Air	1:18
[30] Hark! The echoing Air	2:29
[31] Grand Dance	3:10

total time 78:57

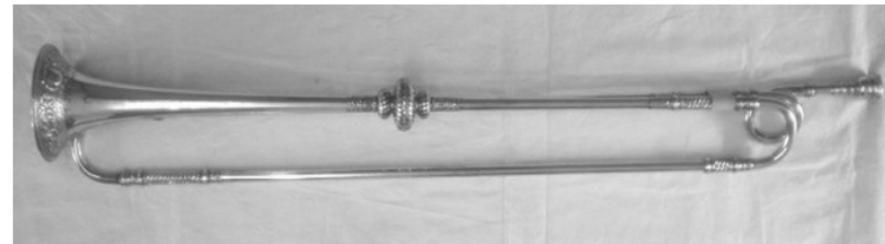
I was really moved when I heard my orchestra play the opening bars of the music of Purcell in the first rehearsal. I heard a sound that was quite different to what I knew from other present-day baroque orchestras. Was this sound closer to that of Purcell's own orchestra, a sound that he may have had in mind when composing this wondrous music?

In the very first chat I had about this project with Lidewij van der Voort, our new concertmaster, we talked about the modern adaptations that are often (and understandably) applied to baroque instruments nowadays, and about the possibility of going back to authentic strings (completely bare gut) and a 17<sup>th</sup> century bow hold (the French grip) for this Purcell project. As it happens, I'd had a similar conversation not long before that with Lidewij de Sterck, our principal oboist, about authentic reeds (scraped from the inside) and with Graham Nicholson, our principal trumpeter and also a renowned trumpet maker, about 17<sup>th</sup> century trumpets (natural trumpets with no finger holes). These aspects, seemingly just details, have a major impact not just on the sound but also the way of playing and therefore on the way we interpret the music.

We all felt the need to record this CD with these 'experimental' instruments. Musically and technically, this was an engrossing challenge and a necessary step in today's musical world of overlap and crossover, where identity and authenticity are gaining in importance. I knew during rehearsals that we'd made the right decision. An orchestral sound with so much transparency and colour, a way of playing with such narrative power! I'm full of admiration for the musicians

who played so beautifully and who were prepared to take up the challenge of moving away from a well-trodden path. And I'm very grateful to Graham Nicholson for building two silver trumpets especially for this project, exact replicas of the trumpet that belonged to John Shore, Purcell's own trumpet player, without finger holes...

Mike Fentross



Trumpet from William Bull, the trumpeter and musical instrument maker for the Royal Court of England, now in the Museum of Warwick.

Henry Purcell (1658/9-1695) was born into a musical family just before the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Both his father and his uncle became royal musicians and young Henry joined the Children of the Chapel Royal as a chorister at around the age of nine. His teachers included Captain Henry Cooke, John Blow and Christopher Gibbons.

He started composing young and during the reigns of Charles II and James II continued as a court musician. When William & Mary came to the throne late in 1688, royal support for music declined and Purcell, already composing incidental music for plays at Dorset Garden Theatre, began composing full-scale English opera, also called dramatic or semi-opera: five act plays with spoken dialogue, a great deal of music and a fifth act masque ending in a Grand Dance for all the dancers, with the entire cast on stage.

Dorset Garden, which opened in November 1671, was the first English theatre specifically built for moveable scenery, allowing quick changes and transformations, as popular then as they are now. Dramatic opera is not inferior to through-composed opera, it is a separate genre evolving via Gilbert and Sullivan to the present-day musicals by Bernstein and Sondheim. In its early form, the principals didn't sing, as that would have meant 'breaking character'. Only servants, peasants, drunks and supernatural personages sing in dramatic opera.

Purcell often included Trumpet Tunes in his scores for the various players of the Shore family, master trumpeters and members of the King's Musick, as were many of the orchestra. The last birthday ode for Queen Mary, *Come Ye Sons of*

*Art away* (Z.323, 1694), the word-book probably by Nahum Tate, contains the duet *Sound the Trumpet*, with the text *You make the list'ning Shores rebound*: his punning tribute to the family.

As was already customary in the previous century, Purcell differentiated between the trumpet keys of C major and D major, D being used for pure celebration, while C was reserved for more bombastic occasions such as the entrance of royalty. Purcell's more general rhetorical tools include using C minor, which often denoted melancholy, E minor for fate and G minor for death or *le petit mort*. His instrumentation was also meaningful: tavern scenes were always accompanied by "fiddles".

*The Prophetess: or, The History of Dioclesian* (Z.627, 1690), was known as *Dioclesian* to avoid confusion after the Finger/Settle *Virgin Prophetess* was produced in 1701 and was a reworking of a 1623 Fletcher and Massinger play, the word-book by Thomas Betterton, manager and principal actor of Dorset Garden. Its plot, the rise to imperial power of the common soldier Diocles, followed by his abdication for love, is interesting in connection with the dual monarchy of Mary and William of Orange, only a Stadholder in the Dutch Republic. Dioclesian's nephew Maximinian's ardent *What shall I do to show how much I love her?* will eventually gain him the princess Aurelia, while Dioclesian retires to love in a cottage with the Prophetess' niece Drusilla..

*The Dance of Furies* is a transformation scene, characteristic of English opera, the Furies being suddenly transformed from a Monster, sent by magic to stop Dioclesian from marrying Aurelia, as the Prophetess, Delphia, wants him to

marry Drusilla instead. "A Cupola with Termes" is transformed into the *Butterfly Dance*. Since from my dear, added to the 1693/4 revival, is sung by a Faun. Dioclesian is bereft. His longing for the princess, the wrong woman for him, is graphically depicted in the final thrice-repeated "die", used in both its primary and secondary meaning. *The Indian Queen* (Z.630, 1695) was originally a play by Sir Robert Howard and former Poet Laureate John Dryden. A battle between Aztecs and Incas (not historical!) results in victory for Montazuma, adored by Zempoalla, whose problem is demonstrated in the third act / *Attempt from Love's sickness to fly*. She eventually commits suicide after being rejected. *The Indian Queen*, Purcell's final opera, has far less staging and music than earlier ones. It was presented at the less well-equipped Drury Lane Theatre, Betterton, most of the actors and the professional singers having left the company after the actors' rebellion- taking the scenery with them.

Dryden probably adapted his and his brother-in-law Howard's play himself and may also have found it difficult to make the cuts in the text necessary to accommodate the music. Henry Purcell died before finishing the score and the fifth-act masque was composed by his brother Daniel.

*King Arthur* (Z.628, 1691), word-book by John Dryden, celebrates the magnanimous victory of the Britons under Arthur over the Saxon invaders. In the final masque an island rises from under the stage, showing Britannia seated, fishermen at her feet. Venus sings *Fairest Isle*, followed by Honour who sings the equally patriotic *St. George*, William III being hailed as one of the *Foreign Kings Adopted here, / Their Crowns at Home despise*. The *Chaconne*, the final Grand Dance follows.

*The Fairy Queen* (Z.629, 1692) as we know it is a reconstruction, the original score is missing. The opera is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, with elaborate allegorical masques in the second and third acts. The *Symphony* is played while "two Swans come Swimming on through the Arches [of a bridge] to the bank of the River, as if they would Land, and there turn themselves into Fairies..." *If Love's a Sweet Passion* is sung by a dryad. Later a naiad sings *Ye Gentle Spirits of the Air*.

In Act II the human lovers spend the night in the wood. The Followers of Night dance and sing *See even Night herself is here*. The final masque is highly elaborate, a celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of William & Mary, that November. It includes monkeys, referring to Williams menagerie, Chinese singers, in honour of Mary's famous porcelain collection and Hymen, the god of marriage. Cupids clap their wings in *Hark! The Echoing Air*, after which all the dancers join in the final *Chaconne*, the Grand Dance.

Dr. Julia Muller



**La Sfera Armoniosa**, founded in 1992, is a Dutch Baroque ensemble and orchestra specialized in the performance of music from the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Artistic director and conductor is Mike Fentross. In addition to the music of famous composers such as Monteverdi, Haendel and Vivaldi, the ensemble undertakes research into the manuscripts and printed works of the European libraries in order to provide a rich spectrum of music from lesser known composers. The English music magazine Gramophone wrote about their first cd: *"How soon will we hear the enchanting La Sfera Armoniosa again, and what fresh buried treasure will they unearth?"*

La Sfera Armoniosa is known and praised for its lively and colourful sound and for its groundbreaking programmes. They created in 2004 a Schoenberg/ Monteverdi programme that they performed with great success in the Utrecht Early Music Festival and they performed modern world premiers from three almost forgotten opera's: *La Rosinda*, *l'Ipermestra* and *Granida*. In 2012 the Concertgebouw asked La Sfera to design and perform a special program, the Amsterdam musical life before the concerthall was build, for their 125th anniversary.

La Sfera Armoniosa performed in main festivals and concert halls such as: Festival van Vlaanderen, Festival d'Ambronay, Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht, Music Center Vredenburg, Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci, Monteverdi festival Cremona, Festival de Musica Portico de Zamora, Festival Musica Antiqua Bruges, and the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam.

About their performance of the opera *La Rosinda* by Francesco Cavalli in Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci the press wrote: *'Das Orchester stellt an diesem Abend unter Beweis, dass es zu den führenden Barock-Orchestern gehört. Und was für Zwischentöne auch aus dem Orchestergraben kamen, werde ich so schnell nicht wieder vergessen. Große Kunst war das. Nicht mehr und nicht weniger.'*

#### **Mike Fentross** conductor | lutenist

Mike Fentross has largely earned his credits as an early music specialist. He is working all over Europe as a conductor, soloist and basso continuo player and he is professor of lute and basso continuo at the Royal Conservatory The Hague. In 2006 he founded the baroque orchestra La Sfera Armoniosa.

About the opening concert of the Musica Antiqua Festival in Brugge the press wrote: *He is a true conductor, not only in his movements, but also and especially in his musical thought, developed and original, which distinguishes him from many of his colleagues who are considered to be 'primus inter pares'. Besides a technically perfect performance of his orchestra, his lecture of 'Membra Jesu Nostri' is tempting for its intensity and its theatricality: Fentross increases the contrasts, uses rubati rarely heard in this repertoire and builds powerful nuances which brings to the music a supplementary dimension of sound.* Ton Koopman said in an interview with the German music magazine Concerto: *I have found in Mike Fentross an incredibly gifted basso continuo player. I don't know any one that plays as musical and intelligent continuo as him.*

Mike Fentross conducted in many festivals and concert halls like the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Festival van Vlaanderen, Festival d'Ambronay, Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht, Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci, Paradiso Amsterdam, Monteverdi Festival Cremona, Festival de Musica Portico de Zamora, Festival Musica Antiqua Brugge, Vantaa Early Music Festival, Bayreuth Barock and Muziekcentrum Vredenburg in Utrecht. He twice had the honour to conduct in the presence of Queen Beatrix of Holland.

About his first time conducting the Dutch Chamber Choir in 2010 in the Concertgebouw the press wrote: *Conductor Mike Fentross rivalled Caravaggio with the score of the Maria Vespers. His first time conducting the Nederlands Kamerkoor was a resounding success.*

#### **Lidewij van der Voort**

Lidewij van der Voort believes that Baroque music must express honest affects, not cheap effects. For her, impassioned declamation, natural phrasing and color are the building blocks for honest and uncompromising music-making at the highest level.

Lidewij grew up with Baroque music. During her modern violin studies in Amsterdam it became clear to her that early music would be her future. She specialised with Sigiswald Kuijken in Brussels, as well as with violinists like John Holloway, Enrico Gatti and Roy Goodman. For many years she was first violin of the European Union Baroque Orchestra and soon began working,

often as concert master, with the great European Baroque orchestras: Academy of Ancient Music, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Musica Antiqua Köln, Anima Eterna, De Nederlandse Bachvereniging, B'Rock, The King's Consort and Capriccio Stravagante. She has performed with, among others, Rachel Podger, Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Jos van Immerseel and Richard Egarr and Skip Sempé.

Lidewij was a co-founder of the Dutch Baroque orchestra Holland Baroque Society, where she worked for years as concert master and with whom she won diverse prizes. At the moment she is focusing on the 17th century, the golden age of the violin. This repertoire she performs not only with her newly-founded ensemble FLUX, but also in duo formation with lutenist Fred Jacobs, and with ensembles such as Vox Luminis.

## **La Sfera Armoniosa**

### **violin 1**

Lidewij van der Voort  
(concert master)  
Matthea de Muynck  
Luca Alfonso Rizzello  
Sakura Goto

### **violin 2**

Sara de Vries  
Judith Verona  
Agnieszka Papierska

### **viola**

Femke Huizinga  
Marta Jimenez  
Alaia Ferran

### **bass violin**

Bob Smith  
Diederik van Dijk  
Carlos Leal Cardín

### **oboe 1**

Lidewei de Sterck

### **oboe 2**

Mario Topper

### **bassoon**

Wouter Verschuren

### **trumpet 1**

Graham Nickolson

### **trumpet 2**

Bruno Fernandes

### **percussion**

Norbert Pflanzler

### **viola da gamba**

Bob Smith

### **harpsichord**

Jorge Lopez Escribano

### **theorbo & baroque guitar**

Giulio Quirici  
Mike Fentross

This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



[www.northstarconsult.nl](http://www.northstarconsult.nl)

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A&R Challenge Classics: Anne de Jong

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