Ancient Airs, Timeless Grace

William Boyce (1711-1779)	Symphony No. 7 in F Major I. Allegro II. Vivace ma non troppo III. Allegro
Henry Purcell (1659-1695)	Sonata in D Major for Trumpet and Strings I. Allegro II. Adagio III. Allegro David Zuercher, trumpet
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)	Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-Flat Major, K595 I. Allegro II. Larghetto III. Rondo: Allegro Kelly Zuercher, piano
	INTERMISSION
Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)	Concerto Grosso in D Major, TWV54:D3 I. Intrada – Grave II. Allegro III. Largo IV. Vivace Oboes Nancy Brown, Carla Scott Trumpets David Zuercher, William Flitter, Dan Bell
Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)	Bassoon Concerto in B-flat Major, "La Notte" I. Il Fantasmi (The Ghosts): Largo; Presto; Presto; Adagio II. Il Sonno ("The Sleep"): Largo III. Sorge L'Aurora ("Sunrise"): Allegro Alejandro Vieira, Bassoon
Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)	Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite III I. Simone Molinaro: Balletto ditto "Il Conte Orlando" II. Vincenzo Galilei: Gagliarda III. Anonymous: Villanella IV. Anonymous: Passo mezzo e Mascherada

William Boyce (1711-1779) was born in London, the son of John Boyce, a cabinet maker. As a boy, he sang in the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral. When his voice broke, he decided to study organ technique with Maurice Greene, the cathedral organist. His first professional appointment was as organist at Earl of Oxford's Chapel in Cavendish Square and after two years he became organist at St. Michael's Cornhill. Already writing for the Vauxhall Gardens, he was appointed composer to the Chapel Royal in 1736.

During the 1740s and 1750s, Boyce was at the height of his career composing for stage and court. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by Cambridge University in 1749, and even enjoyed widespread commercial success with the publication of his Trio Sonatas in 1747 and new composing responsibilities for the Drury Lane theatre.

Despite increasing deafness, Boyce was appointed Master of the King's Musick in 1755. His annual compositions of a New Year ode and Birthday ode for King George III were more or less hi entire output for the rest of his life. He devoted his last years to the completion of a collection of the greatest compositions of English church composers.

Boyce's ***Eight Symphonies*** are remarkable, short works in a style foreshadowing the overture. Symphonies 1-5 are in the Italian style, and 6-8 are French overtures. (The Italian style is a simple fast-slow-fast form, and the French is generally a slow opening followed by a number of dance movements.) **Symphony No. 7 in F Major** is unique in that there are no slow movements and a fairly large wind section for orchestras of the period.

What no one will fail to find in Purcell at his best is a spring of life, a vitality that glows with the effort of the whole man. To listen is to share an experience, to catch some of his glancing fire and to have a part in his aching regret.—J. A. Westrup

By any measure, **Henry Purcell** (1659-1695) was England's finest Baroque composer, and would have established a unique English Baroque style if he hadn't died at the age of 36. Purcell's father and uncle were both professional musicians at the court of Charles II, and his brother Daniel was an organist and a composer. These family connections gave Purcell access to some of the finest musicians and pedagogues of the day. Purcell became a court composer in 1677 secured a position as organist at Westminster Abbey in 1697. Most of his life was spent in various positions in and around Westminster, including Whitehall palace and the Chapel Royal at St. James. He is remembered primarily for two of his finest operas—*Dido and Aeneas* and *The Fairy Queen*.

Purcell's ***Sonata in D Major for Trumpet and Strings*** is believed by many scholars to be the overture to the lost ode *The Light of the World*. It is structured in the fast-slow-fast Italian style and is a fine example of Purcell's gift of melody and phrasing.

I declare to you before God, and as an honest man, that your son is the greatest composer I know, either personally or by name. –Joseph Haydn, *to Leopold Mozart.*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) showed such a prodigious talent for music in his early childhood that his father, also a composer, dropped all other ambitions and devoted himself to educating the boy and exhibiting his accomplishments. Between ages six and fifteen, Mozart was on tour over half the time. By 1762, he was a virtuoso on the clavier—an early keyboard instrument and predecessor of the piano—and soon became a good organist and violinist as well. He produced his first minuets at the age of six, and his first symphony just before his ninth birthday, his first oratorio at eleven, and his first opera at twelve. His final output would total more than 600 compositions. Much has already been said and studied in the popular media about Mozart's roguish lifestyle and apprehension of conformity. It was this aspect of his personality that never won him

the support of royalty or the church, which, at that time, was critical to any composer's survival. As such, Mozart died young, ill, poor, and relatively unappreciated … only to become the mostly widely acknowledged orchestral composer in history.

Mozart completed his **Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-flat Major, K595** on January 5, 1791, about one year before his death, and the piece was premiered on March 4 of the same year. It followed two years of extreme financial hardship that threatened his marriage. Gone are the idyllic grace and subtle humor of Mozart's happier days. Instead, we hear a wisp of introspection or perhaps even resignation. As the least virtuosic of all Mozart's concertos, K595 requires a depth and invention from its soloist beyond all of his concertos.

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) was considered the greatest German composer of the first half of the 18th century … until the more objective lens of history was given a few centuries to consider J.S. Bach's music. Nonetheless, Telemann was incredibly prolific, writing among other things about 40 operas, 46 Passions, and five complete cycles of cantatas. At its best, the music of Telemann has a right melodiousness foreshadowing that of Haydn and Mozart.

Born at Magdeburg to an affluent middle-class family, Telemann went against family tradition, choosing to study music over service in the clergy. Pressed by his father to study law instead, Telemann went to the University of Leipzig in 1701, but once his musical abilities were discovered, it was impossible for him to do anything else. He founded the Collegium Musicum, a society that gave public concerts which Bach later directed, and became a widely respected organist. Telemann left Leipzig in 1705 for positions in Sorau and Eisenach, but settled for nine years (1712-1721) into a position as Music Director of the city of Frankfurt. He moved to Hamburg in 1722 to become cantor and take charge of the music at the five principal churches in the city, and remained there until his death, when he was succeeded by his godson, C.P.E. Bach.

Telemann's **Concerto Grosso in D Major, TWV54:D3,** features two oboes and three trumpets as the solo instruments. The trumpet parts were written for the valveless predecessor of the modern trumpet, called a "natural trumpet," which was a notoriously difficult and physically demanding instrument to play. Even the modern piccolo trumpets have little impact on the extreme demands of range and tessitura often employed by Baroque composers. Employing a grand "intrada" to begin the piece and a short slow section to transition to the body of the work, the rest of the concerto is a typical Italian fast-slow-fast form. Here, however, it is the counterpoint, the innovative scoring, and the virtuosic technical displays by all of the soloists that make the piece special, both in the context of Telemann's output and in the entire Baroque repertoire.

The compositions chosen for the festival confronted us with a Vivaldi who can be compared without hesitation to J.S. Bach. Every day it is more evident that the influence exerted by Vivaldi on the Cantor was considerable and perhaps even decisive in his molding. –Alfredo Casella*, writing of the Vivaldi Festival in Siena, 1939*.

Long famous throughout Europe as a composer and violinist, Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) lost his public during the last decade of his life. He spent his final days in penury and, like Mozart after him, was buried in a pauper's grave, his scores seemingly doomed to obscurity. In fact, more than 200 years passed before musicians made the first sustained attempt at reviving the composer's works, in the late 1940s, and even at that time, musicologists would have scoffed at the suggestion that Vivaldi could ever again attain best-seller status. Yet, in the mid-1960s, Vivaldi's music had,

with storybook rapidity, regained the kind of widespread admiration and adoration it had last known in the1720s.

The vast size of Vivaldi's concerto output, (some 500 surviving works), was a consequence of the composer's 35 years of employment at Venice's *Pio Ospedale della Pietà*, where new music was constantly needed for the weekly Sunday public concerts presented by the students. The *Pietà* originated as a shelter and school for female orphans, but soon proved of such educational excellence (particularly in music) that the wealthy citizens began sending their daughters there. Clearly, the *Pietà* girls were superlatively trained musicians, or so Vivaldi's concertos indicate.

Vivaldi apparently considered such student works of less importance to his career than his operas, forty-six of which survive though there may have been many more. He repeatedly took leaves of absence from the *Pietà* to supervise productions of his stage works in various Italian cities.

Vivaldi's **Bassoon Concerto in B-flat Major, op. 45, no. 8, "La Notte"** has strong similarities to his Four Seasons violin concerti. Both foreshadow the tone poems of the Romantic through ingenious musical descriptions of stories and ideas. In the first movement, Vivaldi uses a stately and unassuming introduction to establish a "nighttime" feel, but moves quickly into a wildly technical display for the bassoon describing "Il Fantasmi" or ghosts. A short adagio segues to a quiet largo "Il Sonno" or sleep. The final movement depicts a sunrise (Sorge L'Aurora) ending the mysterious night with more brilliant wizardry by the soloist.

Here is an elegant way of writing, in the sense of the rhetoric of another day; a beautiful harmonizing; a splendid method of orchestration; and with these a desire to be agreeable, well-mannered, and respectable at all costs. —Gatti.

As the descendent of a family of professional musicians, **Ottorino Respighi** (1879-1936) inherited a rich talent as part of his birthright. His earliest music lessons were with his father, but he progressed so rapidly that he began his professional training in violin, piano and composition at the age of just thirteen. As a young man, Respighi was torn between ambitions to become a concert violinist or a composer. He got a job as a violist with the orchestra of the St. Petersburg Opera, and took advantage of his time in Russia to study with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, whose brilliant orchestral technique was a lasting influence. He then moved to Berlin to study violin and composition with Max Bruch. Respighi spent the years from 1903 to 1925 primarily in Italy, first as a performer, then as professor of composition, and finally as head of the Saint Cecilia Academy in Rome. He left the Academy in 1925 to devote himself to composition and touring, making four trips to the United States during the next seven years. He died of a heart attack at the age of fifty-six.

Respighi had an abiding interest in the music of the late Renaissance and Baroque eras, and he edited many works by such venerable composers as Monteverdi, Frescobaldi, Tartini and Vitali for publication. Speaking against serialism and mechanical/mathematical music that was being played in some concert halls and chased away audiences, Respighi was one of ten composers who issued a document espousing the hallowed philosophy of music as communication: "We are against art which cannot and does not have any human content and desires to be merely a mechanical demonstration and a cerebral puzzle. A logical chain binds the past and the future—the romanticism of yesterday will again be the romanticism of tomorrow." Given most current trends in composition, they were obviously correct.

Among the most charming of Respighi's works based on old models are the three sets of *Ancient Airs and Dances* (1917, 1924, 1932), arrangements of Italian and French lute and keyboard pieces of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth centuries. Respighi kept the old melodies and harmonies intact while enriching their texture and providing them with brilliant orchestral color.

The **First Suite** of ***Ancient Airs and Dances*** opens with a *Balletto detto "Il Conte Orlando"* ("*Count Orlando's Dance*") issued in Venice in 1599 as part of a large collection of lute pieces by Simone Molinaro (ca. 1565-ca. 1613). The following *Gagliarda* is the work of Vincenzo Galilei (1520-1591), the Florentine composer and theorist and father of Galileo Galilei. Respighi placed in the center of the movement an anonymous Italiana built above a bagpipe-like drone. The lovely third movement, a sort of serenade with plucked accompaniment undoubtedly meant to resemble a lute, is a Villanella, a vocal form that originated in Naples during the mid-sixteenth century as a reaction to the refinement and pretensions of the sophisticated madrigal. Two pieces of unknown origin, a quick *Passo mezzo* and a flowing *Mascherada*, a type of *villanella* used for masquerades, alternate to bring the work to a joyous close.