

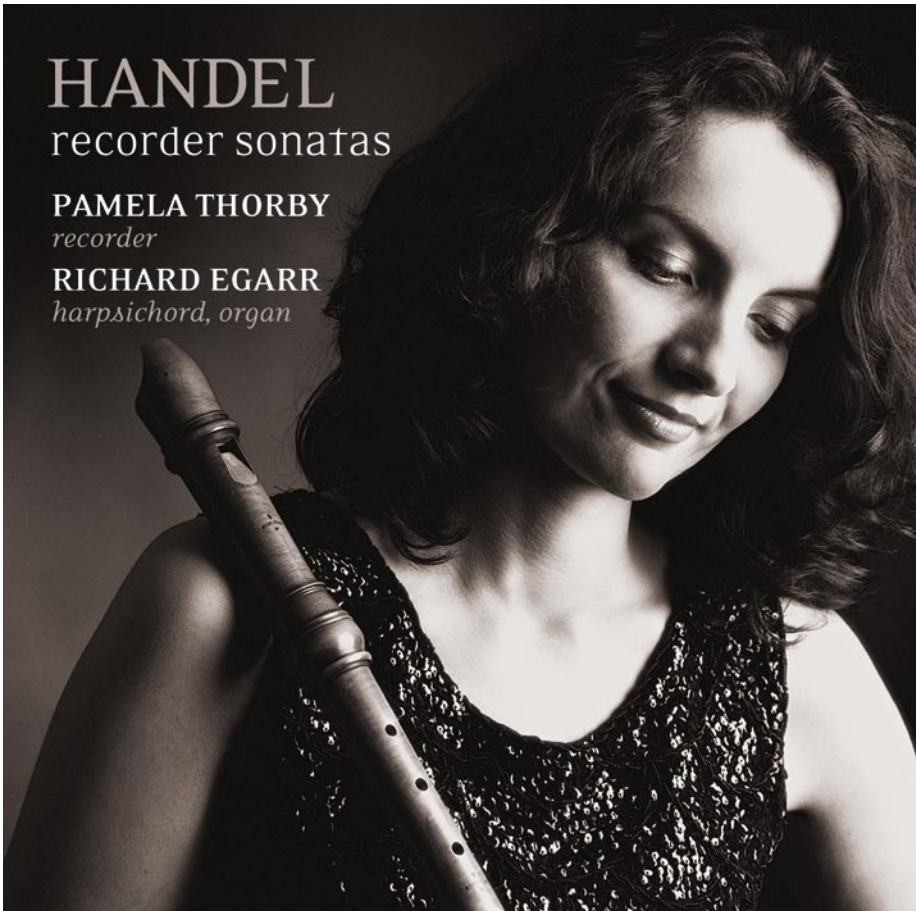


HANDEL

recorder sonatas

PAMELA THORBY
recorder

RICHARD EGARR
harpsichord, organ



1st movement (untitled) of the B flat major sonata from the Fitzwilliam Manuscript M.S.260

HANDEL

recorder sonatas

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

Sonata in D minor HWV 367a

- 1 *largo* - 2.14
- 2 *vivace* - 3.09
- 3 *furioso* - 2.00
- 4 *adagio* - 1.20
- 5 *alla breve* - 1.47
- 6 *untitled* - 2.45
- 7 *a tempo di menuet* - 1.31

Sonata in B flat major HWV 377

- 8 *untitled* - 2.12
- 9 *adagio* - 1.20
- 10 *allegro* - 2.33

Sonata in C major HWV 365

- 11 *larghetto* - 2.44
- 12 *allegro* - 2.16
- 13 *larghetto* - 2.01
- 14 *a tempo di gavotta* - 2.14
- 15 *allegro* - 2.21

Harpisichord Suite in E major HWV 430

- 16 *prelude* - 2.04
- 17 *allemande* - 5.34
- 18 *courante* - 1.55
- 19 *air with doubles* - 4.29

Sonata in F major HWV 369

- 20 *grave* - 2.28
- 21 *allegro* - 2.24
- 22 *alla Siciliana* - 1.14
- 23 *allegro* - 1.56

Sonata in A minor HWV 362

- 24 *larghetto* - 2.33
- 25 *allegro* - 2.27
- 26 *adagio* - 2.07
- 27 *allegro* - 3.23

Sonata in G minor HWV 360

- 28 *larghetto* - 2.18
- 29 *andante* - 3.26
- 30 *adagio* - 0.46
- 31 *presto* - 1.59

PAMELA THORBY *recorder*

RICHARD EGARR *harpisichord, organ*

Recorded at The National Centre for Early Music, York - 3rd & 4th June 2003

Produced and engineered by Philip Hobbs
Post-Production by Julia Thomas at Finesplice

Photographs of Pamela by Hanya Chlala

Photograph of Richard by Marco Borggreve

Alto recorder by Frederick Morgan
after originals by Bressan and Stanesby Jnr
Harpisichord by Joel Katzman, Amsterdam 1991
(after Ruckers, 1638)

Chamber Organ by Peter Collins, 1995
Temperament : Vallotti-Young

*With thanks to David Lasocki -
your help and advice is greatly appreciated.*



GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Recorder Sonatas

Handel composed his six recorder sonatas in London in 1724-1726, a period when he was enjoying enormous success with a feast of Italian operas -- *Giulio Cesare*, *Rodelinda*, *Scipione* written for his company, The Royal Academy of Music. He was writing florid show-stopping arias for his star singers and vital, colourful scores for his star orchestra. Many of Handel's operatic and orchestral works call upon the recorder (or a pair of recorders) for a few choice moments, usually to represent the pastoral, love scenes, or matters spiritual. There were no recorder specialists: rather, the oboists in the orchestra were called upon to pick up a recorder (or sometimes a flute) for the relevant aria or movement. It is easy to imagine that Handel wrote the recorder sonatas for one of these woodwind players -- the leading ones of their day -- to perform in the interval 'entertainments', or mini-concerts, of theatre or operatic performances or in a London concert hall. We are ever grateful that the humble recorder, which had been the instrument of choice for the gentleman amateur in England for the last forty years, received a collection of sonatas lovingly crafted by a great composer at the height of his powers.

The recorder sonatas are a distillation of Handel's favourite melodic and rhetorical devices. A master craftsman, he was able to recreate elements of opera, oratorio, concerto, or orchestral suite in perfect pocket-book form. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that he used these very pieces as models to teach figured bass to Princess Anne (daughter of George II) and later to John Christopher Smith, the son of his main copyist. It is because of these lessons that we have Handel's fair copies for the A minor, F major, C major and G minor sonatas, with meticulously figured bass parts to work from.

The **D MINOR SONATA**, with its orchestral sweep of seven movements, is action-packed: a limpid, bitter-sweet opening aria; a stirring

hornpipe; a gripping chase scene; an imploring, impassioned *Corellian* Adagio; a forthright comment from the *Alla breve* chorus; then two charming formal dances to end the proceedings in a civilised manner.

The **B-FLAT MAJOR SONATA** is the simplest and shortest of the set. After a sparkling courante (taken from the Overture to *Scipione*), the sombre grandeur of the Adagio is framed by an effervescent Giga bursting with exuberance and joie de vivre. Another version of the third movement exists in the A major violin sonata (HWV 361) also written c.1725-26.

The **C MAJOR SONATA** begins with a supple, assured aria over a walking bass figure, providing the prelude to the fugal intricacy of another section of the Overture to *Scipione*. A lingering aria (taken from the F major oboe sonata, c1712-16) then arches its way over a ground bass, followed by the sweet politeness of a Gavotte and a jaunty Passepied to close.

The **F MAJOR SONATA** begins with a Grave of noble simplicity, its architectural lines leading to an Allegro gently bubbling with contentment and affection. Handel takes a more measured tone in the Siciliana. But he cannot help making the final Giga a joyous and infectious reworking of one of his favourite instrumental themes (borrowed from a flute sonata and a trio sonata for two recorders and basso continuo, both c1707). In 1735, he arranged the entire recorder sonata as an Organ Concerto (HWV 293).

The **A MINOR SONATA** is the most overtly dramatic of the six sonatas. Imagine, if you will, the first movement as the agony of a heroine lamenting the deceit of her lover. As she weeps, the bass line shows us her heartbeat, heavy and exhausted. Change the scene swiftly to a rage aria, with the basso continuo line providing the bile and venom. Contrast that with the coy beauty of the Adagio, then the bickering cut and thrust of the final Allegro (another theme that Handel reworked many times).





The G MINOR SONATA, on the other hand, is more instrumental than vocal in flavour, full of phrases reminiscent of Corelli's violin works but made personal by bold leaps and unexpected shifts of rhythm. The theme of the final gavotta comes from a movement called *Aria* from George Muffat's *Armonico tributo* for string orchestra (1682). Handel clearly loved it, for he reworked it several times, in a cantata, three operas, a flute sonata and two organ concertos.

The fair copies of Handel's autograph manuscripts are entitled *Sonata a Flauto e Cembalo* (Sonata for recorder and harpsichord), implying no addition of a cello or bassoon to fatten out the bass line in performance. In keeping with their titles, the sonatas are true duets, their interactive, muscular bass lines equal to the suave and characterful melody lines. The role of the basso continuo is thus not a subservient one (as is the case in recorder sonatas by Handel's contemporaries, Barsanti, Bononcini, Veracini, and the like), but continually comments on, energises and informs the narrative.

In his oratorio performances Handel included organ concertos as an extra attraction, using them as vehicles for his legendary skill at improvisation. The composers Arne and Festing told Dr Charles Burney that they had never heard better playing, 'premeditated' or otherwise. Yet there are hints from other reports that his ornamentation was sometimes a little too exuberant for the taste of his audience. In matters of ornamentation, our own unspoken aim, within the 'snapshot' form of a CD, was to enhance the musical language yet leave our individual imprint upon the elegant sufficiency of Handel's melodies, demonstrating our admiration for his music. We played directly from facsimiles of the autograph manuscripts.

Pamela Thorby
February 2004.



PAMELA THORBY

Pamela Thorby is considered to be one of the most versatile and stylish recorder players on the international music scene. Her virtuoso playing can be heard on numerous CDs of music ranging from the medieval period to the present day. Pamela is perhaps best known for her baroque playing with her own chamber quartet, the Palladian Ensemble (with whom she has recorded nine acclaimed albums for LINN), but also as a soloist with the English

Concert, Sonnerie, New London Consort and many other eminent period and modern instrument ensembles and orchestras. Her Baroque Recorder Concertos disc (Linn CKD217) featuring concertos by Vivaldi, Sammartini and Telemann for LINN Records received outstanding reviews in 2003 - *"a world-class performer"* GRAMOPHONE

As well as her 'classical' playing, Pamela's ability to assimilate many styles of music and her skills as an improviser have led to her work with groups such as the modern jazz quartet the Perfect Houseplants'. She features on their 'New Folk Songs' album (Linn CKD 130). Pamela is a featured soloist on all of Karl Jenkins crossover 'Adiemus' albums and on 'Imagined Oceans', which was written especially for her. Her appearances on these million-selling crossover albums make her the most listened to recorder player in the world.

As a soloist and chamber musician Pamela has performed throughout the UK including London's Albert Hall, the South Bank Centre and Wigmore Hall, Birmingham Symphony Hall and Bridgewater Hall, Manchester and toured extensively in Europe (including such prestigious venues as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Konserthus Stockholm, Konzerthaus Wien,

Frankfurt Alte Oper, Cologne Philharmonie and Lyon Opera), USA, South America, the Middle and Far East. She has also featured on many film soundtracks and recordings for BBC radio and television.

Pamela was a prize-winning student at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London and returned to teach the recorder as a principal instrument within a few years of graduating. She has given classes in Urbino, Italy, Dartington Summer School and the Royal Academy of Music in London.



RICHARD EGARR

Richard Egarr is one of the most exciting and versatile musicians of his generation. He plays all types of historical keyboards, performing music ranging from fifteenth century organ intabulations to modern piano music from this century.

Richard's musical training as a choirboy at York Minster, at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, and as Organ-Scholar at Clare College Cambridge, brings a deep and wide-

ranging experience to Richard's activities inside and outside Early Music. His study with Gustav Leonhardt in Amsterdam further inspired his work in the field of historical performance, culminating in his taking top prize in the International C.P.E. Bach Fortepiano-Clavichord-Harpsichord Competition in Hamburg.

As a conductor Richard Egarr has had great experience in many fields. He has directed operas and oratorios, from Bach's Matthew Passion to John Taverner's

Ikon of Light. He has been greeted as director of specialised ensembles and modern orchestras alike, notably The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The Academy of Ancient Music, Portland Baroque Orchestra, The Hanover Band, Amsterdam Bach Soloists, Dutch Radio Chamber Orchestra, Vienna Chamber Orchestra and Bochum Symphony Orchestra. He is director of the Amsterdam based Academy of the Begijnhof.

As (orchestral) soloist, Richard has performed extensively in the major music festivals throughout Europe, as well as critically acclaimed tours in the USA and Japan. He has played at the Musikverein in Vienna, the Philharmonie in Berlin, and the Wigmore Hall in London. He was guest soloist with the Dutch Radio Chamber Orchestra for three consecutive years, in concertos by C.P.E. Bach, Haydn and Mozart.

In chamber music, Richard has a highly successful cooperation with violinist Andrew Manze, in their unparalleled performances of music from the Stylus Phantasticus and late baroque. Richard Egarr has appeared on many recordings. His solo discs include works by Frescobaldi, Gibbons, Couperin, Purcell, J.S. Bach, and the complete recording of the keyboard works of Johann Jakob Froberger. Other recordings include a new recording 'Per Cembalo Solo' and sonatas by Rebel, Handel (nominated for a Grammy Award) and Bach with Andrew Manze (all HM USA).

PAMELA AND RICHARD began their musical partnership as students together at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, leading to acclaimed duo recitals at the Purcell Room and the Wigmore Hall in London. They have appeared in concert and on disc together on many occasions as their respective careers progressed, but this is the first time that they have recorded together as a duo.

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