

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

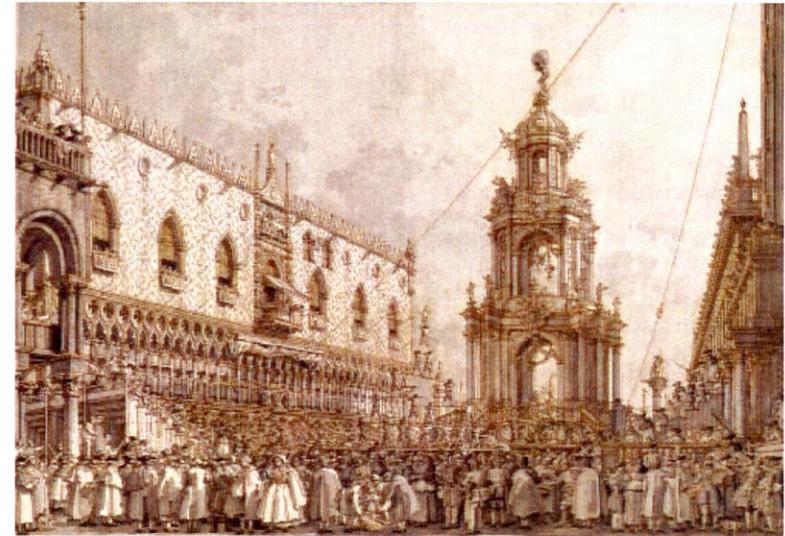
Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

www.nga.gov

COVER: Canaletto, *The "Giovedì Grasso" Festival before the Ducal Palace in Venice*, c. 1765, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Wolfgang Ratjen Collection, Paul Mellon Fund



The Sixty-ninth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,828th Concert

Red Priest

Piers Adams, *recorders*
David Greenberg, *violin*
Angela East, *cello*
David Wright, *harpsichord*

February 27, 2011
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

"A Venetian Carnival"

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

Concerto in G Minor, "La Notte" (The Night), RV 439

Largo

Phantoms (Presto; largo; presto)

Sleep (Largo)

The Chase (Allegro)

Giovanni Bassano (1558–1617)

Divisions on "Onques Amour"

Giovanni Paolo Cima (c. 1570–1622)

Sonata

Dario Castello (c. 1590–c. 1630)

Sonata Seconda

Maurizio Cazzati (1620–1677)

Ciaccona

Domenico Gabrielli (1651–1690)

Sonata in G for Cello

Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)

Variations on "La Folia," op. 5, no. 12

INTERMISSION

Vivaldi

The Four Seasons

Concerto in E Major, "La Primavera" (Spring)

Allegro

Largo

Allegro

Concerto in G Minor, "L'Estate" (Summer)

Allegro non molto

Adagio; presto

Presto

Concerto in F Major, "L'Autunno" (Autumn)

Allegro

Adagio molto

Allegro

Concerto in F Minor, "L'Inverno" (Winter)

Allegro non molto

Largo

Allegro

The Musicians

THE ENSEMBLE

With comparisons to Cirque du Soleil, Jackson Pollock, the Marx Brothers, and the Rolling Stones, Red Priest has been described by music critics as visionary, heretical, outrageous, compulsive, wholly irreverent, and highly enlightened. Other critical comments have included “completely wild and deeply imaginative,” “[with a] red-hot wicked sense of humor,” and “[taking a] break-all-rules, rock-chamber concert approach to early music.”

Founded in 1997 and named after Antonio Vivaldi, the flame-haired composer who was also a priest, this iconoclastic foursome has performed at festivals in Bermuda, Hong Kong, Moscow, and Prague, as well as at the Ravinia and Schwetzingen music festivals. The ensemble’s concert tours have taken it to Australia, Europe, Japan, and North and Central America. It is currently on its twenty-ninth coast-to-coast tour of the United States, and will shortly make its fourth tour of Japan and its debut in Taiwan. The group has been the subject of hour-long profiles for the Japanese national network **NHK** and **ITV** in the United Kingdom, launching the latter network’s *Red Hot Baroque Show*, an electrifying marriage of old music and the latest light and video technology.

In 2008 Red Priest launched its own record label, Red Priest Recordings, which has attracted much attention in the music press worldwide. Recent releases have included *Pirates of the Baroque* and the group’s all-Bach recording, *Johann, I’m Only Dancing*. More fully described at www.redpriest.com, the ensemble appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Lisa Sapinkopf Artists, www.chambermuse.com.

PIERS ADAMS

Heralded by *The Washington Post* as “the reigning recorder virtuoso in the world today,” Piers Adams has performed at numerous festivals and in concert halls throughout the world, including London’s Royal Festival, Wigmore, and Queen Elizabeth halls, and as concerto soloist with the Academy of Ancient Music, the **BBC** Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. He has made several solo CDs, ranging from his award-winning Vivaldi debut disc to a recording of David Bedford’s *Recorder Concerto*—one of many major works written for and premiered by Adams. He has also researched, arranged, and performed virtuoso recorder solos from classical, romantic, and folk repertoire.

DAVID GREENBERG

A native of Maryland who now lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia, David Greenberg taught himself folk fiddle tunes by ear as a young child. In the mid-1980s, he studied baroque violin with Stanley Ritchie. In the 1990s, while developing a specialty in Scottish baroque folk music, Greenberg worked with the Canadian early music ensemble Tafelmusik, recording three groundbreaking CDs in that genre with the group Puirt A Baroque. With his wife, Kate Dunlay, Greenberg co-authored a treatise on Cape Breton fiddle music, *The DunGreen Collection*. In addition to Red Priest, Greenberg performs with Doug MacPhee, David McGuinness, and Chris Norman as well as with his own Tempest Ensemble.

ANGELA EAST

Praised by *The Times* of London for the “elemental power” of her cello playing, Angela East is widely respected as one of the most brilliant and dynamic performers in the period instrument world. She has given numerous concerto performances in London’s Queen Elizabeth and Wigmore halls, and has performed as soloist and continuo cellist with many of Europe’s leading baroque orchestras as well as with her own ensemble, The Revolutionary Drawing Room. The famous venues in which she has played include the Glyndebourne, La Scala, and Sydney opera houses and the Palace of Versailles. Her interpretations of J. S. Bach’s cello suites and several popular baroque sonatas were recently released on two CDs by Red Priest Recordings.

DAVID WRIGHT

Having joined the group in January 2011, David Wright is the newest member of Red Priest. He was almost entirely self-taught as a musician before gaining a scholarship to attend the Royal College of Music. In addition to the scholarship, he won several prizes as a student, including the International Broadwood Competition, and graduated with distinction. Since then he has worked with Emma Kirkby, James Bowman, and Steven Varcoe, and appeared as a soloist with many groups of international renown. He has directed concerts from the harpsichord, including the first modern performance of Thomas Augustine Arne’s *The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green*. In addition to guest-conducting several European orchestras, Wright spends a good deal of his time performing J. S. Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*, which he recorded in 2007 and has since performed on radio and television.

Program Notes

By the eighteenth century, Venetians could claim a heritage of more than two hundred years of glorious music and illustrious composers. Looking back to the sixteenth century, they could point to Adrian Willaert (1490–1562) and his pupils Andrea (1532–1585) and Giovanni (1554–1612) Gabrieli, all of whom served as music director at the Cathedral of Saint Mark. From the seventeenth century, they could boast of Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643), Francesco Cavalli (1602–1676), and Giovanni Legrenzi (1626–1690). During the course of the eighteenth century, the era of Antonio Vivaldi, Tomaso Albinoni, and the superstar castrato Carlo Broschi, popularly known as Farinelli, the city’s vibrant cultural life also inspired a school of cityscape painters whose achievements are among the most brilliant of the period. The exhibition *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals* celebrates the rich variety of these painted views of Venice, known as *vedute*, through masterworks by Giovanni Antonio Canal (1697–1768), popularly known as Canaletto, and his rivals, including Michele Marieschi (1710–1743), Francesco Guardi (1712–1793), and Bernardo Bellotto (1720–1780). Responding to an art market fueled largely by the Grand Tour, these gifted painters depicted the famous monuments and vistas of Venice in different moods and seasons. Remaining on view in the East Building until May 30, 2011, the exhibition will be complemented by two additional concerts, performed by the National Gallery of Art Vocal Ensemble (March 13), and the Venice Baroque Orchestra (April 10).

The word baroque means many different things — irregular, strange, bizarre, florid, over-the-top, extravagant — all words that describe one of the most extraordinary periods in the history of music. The baroque era began around 1600 with the operas of Claudio Monteverdi, and from this dramatic new style of writing sprang a torrent of instrumental and vocal works in which composers explored new means of musical expression. Their style became known as the *stilus phantasticus* — music without rigid form or structure, prone to eccentricities and flights of fancy, and often requiring

unprecedented virtuosity to perform. The idea of regularity—a fixed beat, even phrases, predictable harmonies—was anathema to these musical pioneers, and this rebellious spirit of adventure was a hallmark of the baroque era.

Italy in general and Venice in particular were at the forefront of this new kind of musical extravagance. Today's program traces its development from the late sixteenth century to its culmination in the writing of the original Red Priest of Venice, Antonio Vivaldi, who flourished in the first half of the eighteenth century. His *Concerto in G Minor*, "La Notte," sounds as shocking today as it must have sounded when it was written. Jagged rhythms and unexpected harmonies conjure up a night of ghosts and fitful sleep, and the effect is reminiscent of a horror film score. Arguably no other musical work captures as vividly the shadowy side of a city in the throes of Carnival excess. Behind the festivities and the masks of Venice lurks the more sinister face of a bureaucratic republic ruled by inquisition and execution, with rumors of occult ritual and sexual decadence.

Giovanni Bassano's music spans the divide between the late Renaissance and early baroque eras. A celebrated cornetto player and musical director at Saint Mark's Cathedral, Bassano was one of the first musicians to develop the concept of virtuoso instrumental music as an art form in its own right, through the composition of solo ricercars and his own highly decorated instrumental versions of vocal works. His divisions on Thomas Crequillon's chanson "Onques Amour" show instrumental technique used to lyrical rather than virtuoso effect.

One of the earliest examples of the *stilus phantasticus*, the sonata by the Milanese organist Giovanni Paolo Cima combines elements of dance, song, and operatic gesture in a freewheeling, unpredictable fashion. The *Sonata seconda* by Dario Castello, a Venetian musician who succeeded Bassano as the "wind-master" in Saint Mark's Cathedral, carries the style to its logical conclusion, producing some of the truly fantastic chamber music of the era. The brief *Ciaccona* by another Venetian, violin virtuoso Maurizio Cazzati, is a lively dance fitted over a jaunty bass riff popular with many composers of the time.

A native of Bologna, Domenico Gabrielli was one of the earliest virtuosos of the cello, for which he composed several notable works including the *Sonata in G*. His unaccompanied ricercars are often viewed as the precursors to the cello suites by Johann Sebastian Bach. The title of the sonata does not include the words "major" or "minor" after the "G," because Gabrielli, like many composers of the seventeenth century in Italy, was still conceiving music theory in terms of modes, rather than keys. In that context, it was customary to identify the mode in which the piece was written by its starting note.

Highly revered by subsequent generations of Italian composers, violinist and composer Arcangelo Corelli was the first to develop the *concerto grosso* format. This served as a model for Vivaldi's concertos, which subsequently became the model for instrumental solo concertos of the later eighteenth century. Described in contemporary accounts as an astonishing musician and performer, Corelli pushed violin technique to previously unimagined limits. His set of twelve sonatas published in 1700 as Opus 5 is considered the precursor to Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. In arranging and interpreting the last piece in the set, *Variations on "La Folia,"* Red Priest has applied baroque concepts of fantasy and invention and added to the mix some modern-day musical folly.

The second half of this evening's program is devoted to Vivaldi's most celebrated work, *The Four Seasons*, recognized to this day as one of the crowning achievements of the golden age of Venetian baroque music. In this work, the composer skillfully depicts a year in the Italian countryside. This musical scene-painting appeals as much to audiences today as it did in the eighteenth century. In arranging Vivaldi's orchestral score for four parts, Red Priest has taken care to preserve the theatrical essence of the work and the full carnivalesque spirit of Venice in the baroque era.

In the first concerto, "Spring," the scene is set in the first movement (*Allegro*) with improvised birdsong and a preview of the main theme on the harpsichord—a joyful song celebrating the arrival of the season. More birdsong follows, and a stream can be heard trickling over the keys of the harpsichord, until the weather turns stormy. Birds reappear tentatively as the spring tempest comes to an end. The scene changes for the serene

second movement (*Largo*), in which, accompanied by the barking of his dog (violin) and the gentle waving of the spring grasses (played by the cello and violin), a shepherd boy plays a melody on his recorder. The first concerto closes with a rustic dance (*Allegro*), evoking the sound of bagpipes.

As the second concerto (“Summer”) begins, the sun shines fiercely, causing earth to crack and man and beast to wilt in the heat. Birds are heard again in this season—first a chorus of cuckoos, then a cooing dove and a chirping goldfinch (on a tiny *garklein* recorder). A summer breeze begins to blow, gaining strength and becoming a violent gale. The shepherd boy cries out in fear of the ensuing storm, his dog barks in a frenzy at his side, and the winds rage. In the second movement, (*Adagio; presto*), all is calm in the eye of the storm. The shepherd tries to sleep in the meadow (a sleepy tune on the recorder), but his dreams are disturbed by the sound of mosquitoes (harpsichord) and bursts of thunder (violin and cello). The shepherd’s restlessness is justified as the summer storm breaks once again in the third movement (*Presto*). Wind, rain, hail, thunder, and lightning abound in this turbulent movement.

The harvest celebration is in full swing as the third movement (“Autumn”) opens. A folk band plays, and a piper juggles two recorders at once. Wine begins to flow freely, a drunkard swaggers in, and the result is merry chaos. The revelers pass out briefly before a patriotic keyboardist rudely wakes everyone up for the final dance. Exhausted, everyone sleeps off the effects of the liquor in the second movement (*Adagio molto*). Strange dreams are implied by a disturbing harpsichord lullaby. The third movement (*Allegro*) brings the break of dawn and an autumn hunt. The riders blow their hunting horns and set off at a brisk canter, soon sighting a wild stag (recorder) which starts to flee in panic. The hounds growl, and a chase ensues. Rifles are fired, and finally the pack catches up with its wounded victim, which struggles vainly to escape but is overcome. Its soul ascends gracefully to heaven and the victorious hunt rides into the distance.

Jagged chords depict the ice and frost in the first movement of “Winter.” The cold north wind begins to blow, and there is much running and stamping of feet to keep warm. During a moment of icy calm, one can hear teeth

chattering noisily. In the second movement (*Largo*), freezing rain falls outside (cello, bass recorder, and harpsichord) while the violinist plays beside a roaring log fire, perhaps dreaming of a holiday in sunny Sicily. In the third movement (*Allegro*), the action moves to a frozen lake, where a skater gracefully turns. Others join him, taking careful steps and falling over a few times, before gaining confidence and playing joyfully together. But the ice cracks suddenly and starts to break up, and the party swiftly comes to an end. The first breath of freezing wind heralds a winter gale, bringing the work to its chilling conclusion!

Program notes based on material provided by Red Priest

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Wilhem Latchoumia, pianist

Music by Debussy, Hahn, Villa-Lobos, and other composers
Presented in honor of *Gauguin: Maker of Myth*

March 2, 2011
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
East Building Auditorium



Leipzig String Quartet

Music by Beethoven

March 6, 2011
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court