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CLASSICS

LIGHT DIVINE

*Baroque music for
treble and ensemble*

The MIN Ensemble

Aksel Rykkvin *treble*

Mark Bennett
trumpet & artistic director

Lazar Miletic
ensemble director

LIGHT DIVINE

1	Concerto in F , HWV 331	George Frideric Handel, <i>Arr. Mark Bennett</i>	[4.18]
2	Eternal Source of Light Divine , HWV 74	George Frideric Handel	[3.10]
3	Passacaille from <i>Sonata in G, Op. 5, No. 5</i> , HWV 399	George Frideric Handel <i>Arr. Mark Bennett</i>	[4.54]
4	What Passion Cannot Music Raise And Quell , HWV 76	George Frideric Handel	[8.18]
5	Alla caccia (Diana cacciatrice) , HWV 79	George Frideric Handel <i>Arr. Mark Bennett</i>	[6.25]
6	Vien con nuova orribil guerra , from <i>La Statira</i>	Tomaso Albinoni <i>Ornaments by Mark Bennett</i>	[5.33]
7	Ciaccona à 7	Philipp Jakob Rittler	[4.58]
8	Ritournelle , from <i>Hippolyte et Aricie</i>	Jean-Philippe Rameau <i>Arr. Aareskjold/Bennett</i>	[1.50]
9	Entrée d'Abaris , from <i>Les Boréades</i>	Jean-Philippe Rameau	[3.47]
10	Tristes apprêts , from <i>Castor et Pollux</i>	Jean-Philippe Rameau <i>Arr. Aareskjold/Bennett</i>	[6.20]
11	Ballet figure and Air , from <i>Zoroastre</i>	Jean-Philippe Rameau <i>Arr. Mark Bennett</i>	[2.21]
12	Orage , from <i>Platée</i>	Jean-Philippe Rameau <i>Arr. Aareskjold/Bennett</i>	[2.33]
13	Je ne sais quel ennui me presse , from <i>Naïs</i>	Jean-Philippe Rameau	[3.37]
14	Chaconne , from <i>Les Indes galantes</i>	Jean-Philippe Rameau <i>Arr. Mark Bennett</i>	[5.43]
Total timings:			[63.47]

The MIN Ensemble · AKSEL RYKKVIN TREBLE
MARK BENNETT TRUMPET & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR · LAZAR MILETIC ENSEMBLE DIRECTOR

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INTRODUCTION

Aksel and I first met in the Oslo Chamber Music Festival in 2016. Aksel had already recorded his first album in the UK with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and had performed some of the more well known music for soprano and trumpet.

We worked together on a few more projects and continued to play these same pieces. A few months later I was given some opportunities to direct and lead my own productions and I invited Aksel along.

I started to introduce new repertoire to Aksel and he just seemed to thrive on this challenge. Projects with The Norwegian Radio Orchestra and the Oslo-based period instrument orchestra Barokkanerne early in 2017 were incredibly successful, and even though Aksel's voice was changing all the time, I took the chance to invite Aksel again for one last project up in the north of Norway with the MIN Ensemble in Narvik.

We had a great time and everything just felt so natural. Aksel and I casually mentioned to Lazar, the artistic leader of the MIN Ensemble, that we would have loved to have had the chance to record some of this new repertoire. He replied with a definite offer and 6 weeks later there we



were - in Jar Kirke, Oslo, making it all happen. Despite the issues of summer holidays and various summer festivals, it just all fell into place. It was a miracle.

The MIN Ensemble, although a modern instrument group, were enthusiastic about my more early music approach. With a mixture of modern and baroque instruments we feel very proud of the end result.

For me, the approach to the music and not just the instruments, has always been 90% of playing early music. We made a compromise with only baroque trumpets, baroque flute, lute and harpsichord, mixed with modern strings, oboes and bassoon. We feel that we have bridged the gap to make this amazing music dance off the page.

Mark Bennett

LIGHT DIVINE

Georg Friedrich Handel (1685-1759) and Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) – twin musical giants of the 18th century, each the king of his own operatic tradition. Near contemporaries, the two composers both inherited a genre governed by convention and artifice, each bending and softening it into something more mutable, more human, exploiting not only its expressive but its dramatic potential.

The orchestra too was amplified by both, enriched with new colours, instruments and rhetoric, and it's this particular innovation that emerges most clearly here in a programme that sets music from Rameau's operas alongside Handel's concert works, putting solo woodwind, strings and trumpet in the spotlight alongside the solo voice.

Although steeped in the Italian tradition of opera, the Handel we meet here is very much the adoptive Englishman, producing music to serve the tastes and pursuits of his wealthy patrons, works intended to entertain but also to reflect the wealth, taste, nobility and faith of their commissioners. More pragmatically, these were functional works often composed to tight

deadlines, as the extent of the composer's musical borrowings – both from himself and others – makes clear.

We begin with a triumphant trumpet fanfare, with the opening movement of the Concerto in C HWV 331 – music best known from Handel's Water Music suite in D. The original suite was famously composed for King George I's outdoor concert on the Thames, and the punchy brilliance of the melodies was carefully designed to ensure that they carried the long distance to their audience. Handel later created a reworking of this suite featuring Horns in F and here, in this specially arranged version by Mark Bennett, we see the re-emergence of the trumpets, but this time in C major. Cast in three sections, this da capo-like movements sets a minor-key middle section between the blazing joy and energy of the outer parts, built around an urgent dialogue between the trumpet – the instigator of each lively, combative exchange – and the rest of the orchestra.

The later Trio Sonata in G major HWV 399 is another musical magpie, this time stealing themes from Handel's operas and ballet music. The graceful, lilting Passacaille takes its melody

from the composer's 1720 opera *Radamisto*. Reduced down to chamber forces, the dance's more questioning, episodic central section gains a new angularity and unmoored interest, while the long melody lines of the outer sections are delicately spun by single strings.

Composed over the course of just 10 days in 1739, the Ode for St Cecilia's Day is another work that takes advantage of pre-existing material, in this case a set of harpsichord suites by Muffat that are ingeniously reinvented by Handel to quite new effect. Soprano aria "What Passion Cannot Music Raise And Quell" pairs its solo singer with an obbligato cello – an idealised musical portrait of Jubal's lyre, the "chorded shell" from which he draws his "celestial sound". The exquisite vocal line is, in many ways, simply a foil for the gilded, filigree ornamentation of the cello writing, which embellishes without ever weighing the melody down.

The relationship between solo voice and obbligato trumpet in the composer's "Eternal Source of Light Divine" is a very different one. The trumpet may echo and amplify the singer, but remains a supporting player rather than an equal in this striking lovely opening movement from Handel's Ode for the Birthday

of Queen Anne. In contrast to the dramatic da capo aria, thriving off contrast, this through-composed piece maintains its rapt mood and dignified pace throughout, unfolding in a single, glowing musical arc, like a beam of light pouring through a stained glass window.

But if Handel's time in England focused his talents in a new direction, his musical style remained indebted to his time spent travelling in Italy. The secular cantata *Diana Cacciatrice*, probably composed in 1707, was written at the request of Handel's friend and patron the Marchese Francesco Maria Ruspoli and premiered privately at his country Palazzo outside Rome. The Marchese was an enthusiastic hunter, and though the cantata nominally celebrates Diana, goddess of hunting, in its martial rhythms, galloping semiquavers and horn-calls (rendered by a solo trumpet rather than a horn) it's also an elegant homage to Ruspoli himself.

The trumpet is also at the fore in Tomaso Albinoni's "Vien con nuova orribil guerra". Although the prolific composer produced over 50 operas for the Venice, only two survive complete, including *La Statira* – the source of this rousing martial aria. Written for the 1726 Carnival season, the opera explores the rivalry

between Statira and Barsimo as they do battle for the Persian throne. Throwing down the gauntlet in rippling semiquaver runs, the aria threatens war in the most elegant of musical terms. The white brilliance of the C major key allows the trumpet – both the voice's support and its musical rival – to shine brightly, disappearing in the brief central section only to return with renewed impact for the da capo.

An instrumental divertissement comes in the form of Czech composer and priest Philipp Jakob Rittler's charming Ciaccona. Growing from a simple ground bass that circles gently in continuo instruments, the work expands outwards, adding ever thicker and more exuberant instrumental embellishments from trumpet and strings, to turn a graceful dance into an ecstatic musical celebration, before reversing the process and dying away to nothing.

Rameau came late to opera. It was only in 1733, at the age of 50, that he composed his first. *Hippolyte et Aricie* startled its Parisian audience with its unfamiliarity, its harmonic and textural innovation, and while some dismissed it as a mere technical experiment by a musical theorist, and some as “a perpetual witchery”, others recognised and admired its

new dramatic breadth and boldness. Composer Andre Campra even went so far as to declare, prophetically, that, “There is enough music in this opera to make 10 of them. This man will eclipse us all”.

And so began as astonishingly rich and fruitful late-flowering of stage works wedding the musical fluidity of French baroque with the orchestral weight and interest of Italian opera, taking a divertissement and amplifying it into a music-drama.

The orchestral episodes included here illustrate perfectly how Rameau took the dance movements that had always decorated French opera and made them part of the unfolding psychology of the piece. Frowning bassoons – Rameau's own instrument, and one the composer wrote for with unique creativity, elevating it from mere bassline support to something much more characterful – introduce the angular theme of the Ritournelle's stiff, fugal dance from *Hippolyte et Aricie*, followed and imitated by the rest of the orchestra. Their sombre mood reflects the turmoil of the despairing Queen Phedre, overcome with illicit desire for her stepson. Also in despair, Abaris has given up hope of being united with beloved

Alphise. The bittersweet Entrée from Act IV of *Les Boreades*, coloured similarly by bassoons, sees him on the brink of suicide, the tumbling string phrases trickling down like tears.

Despair turn to horror in the Air Grave from Act IV of *Zoroastre*. A jagged descending string figure carves out the start of the movement like a lightning bolt through the sky, conjuring the horrifying spectacle (which would have been depicted by dancers in this “ballet figure”) of the spirits of Hell, summoned by Vengeance. Even the lighter, comic *Platee* is charged with musical drama, including the storm that gusts through Act I, summoned by the vengeful Juno in fitful gusts of flute and strings that surge and snatch their way through this musical episode.

Telaire's lament “Tristes apprêts” from the final act of *Castor et Pollux* is one of Rameau's greatest arias. A picture of grief at its most poised and contained, the power of the aria lies precisely in its restraint, its refusal to rage and vent. Faced with the death of her beloved Castor, Telaire stands in front of his funeral monument and contemplates her loss in music whose apparent harmonic stillness on the page translates to something much more unsettled on the ear – chromatic shifts of key constantly

implied, but never fully realised. Bassoons, often crooning high in their register, once again add their plangent, wordless voices to the soprano – an echo, perhaps, of the voice of Castor himself?

“Je ne sais quel ennui me presse” from *Nais* – Rameau's 1749 *pastorale heroique* – is an altogether lighter affair. Even the opening bars, with their distinctive bagpipe-like colouring and sustained drone, establish us far from the central musical drama with its elevated passions of courts and princes. The singer is a young shepherdess, who asks the seer Tiresias to prophecy whether she will find happiness in love. Her innocent request is reflected in an aria torn between the repetitive simplicity of a nursery rhyme and the energy of a lively country dance – an entire character-portrait in musical miniature.

One of the grandest and most extended dances in Rameau's operas, the final Chaconne from *Les Indes Galantes* is also one of the greatest – the movement that, in so many ways, anticipates the future of opera. Dance, here, is no longer an interlude, but a coherent and continuing part of the musical narrative, painted in the colourful detail and episodic structure of this great closing movement.

Alexandra Coghlan, 2017

2 Eternal Source of Light Divine, HWV 74
George Frideric Handel

Eternal source of light divine
With double warmth thy beams display,
And with distinguish'd glory shine,
To add a lustre to this day.

**4 What Passion Cannot Music Raise And
Quell**, HWV 76
George Frideric Handel

What passion cannot Music raise, and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood 'round.
And wondering on their faces fell,
To worship that celestial sound!
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

5 Alla caccia (Diana cacciatrice), HWV 79
George Frideric Handel

Alla caccia, alla caccia
O mie Ninfe seguaci,
Pria che il sol còi suoi raggi
il giorno indori,
L'armi ogn'una prepari,
E il can valore al proprio brando affidi,
Già son pronti i destrieri,
Andiam su liete alla vicina selva,
De'i cignali alla preda ad ogni belva.

*At hunting, hunting
O my followers nymphs,
Before the sun with its rays
lights the day,
The weapons each one prepares,
And the dog gives value to his own sword,
The steeds are already ready
Let us go on to the nearby forest happy,
Of the wild boar to the prey to every beast.*

Foriera la tromba
La meta c'addita
Col suono c'invita
A un sì lieto dì.
E all'or che rimbomba,
Con voce scolpita,
Un' Eco l'imita
Dicendo così.

*Herald trumpet
The goal is there
With the sound invites us
To such a happy day.
And here it booms,
With a sculpted voice,
An echo imitates it
Saying this way.*

6 Vien con nuova orribil guerra, from *La Statira*
Tomaso Albinoni

Vien con nuova orribil guerra
L'empio fato meco irato
Ad insultarmi.
Egli da più forza ed armi
La constanza del mio ben.

*With new and terrible war comes
Wicked fate, in anger,
To affront me.
He gives more force and arms
The constancy of my beloved.*

Questa sol mi da spavento
E abbate e atterra
Quel valore ch'ho nel sen.

*This alone gives me fear,
And weakens and brings to nothing
The courage I have in my heart.*

10 Tristes apprêts, from *Castor et Pollux*
Jean-Philippe Rameau

Tristes apprêts, pâles flambeaux,
Jour plus affreux que les ténèbres,
Astres lugubres des tombeaux,
Non, je ne verrai plus

*Mournful apparitions, pale flames,
Day more frightening than darkness,
Dismal stars within tombs,
No, I shall no longer see anything*

que vos clartés funèbres.
Toi, qui vois mon coeur éperdu,
Père du jour! ô Soleil! ô mon père!
Je ne veux plus d'un bien que Castor a perdu,
Et je renonce à ta lumière.

13 **Je ne sais quel ennui me presse**, from *Nais*
Jean-Philippe Rameau

Je ne sais quel ennui me presse
Est-ce une peine? Est-ce un plaisir?
Je ne vois plus sans rougir
Un Berger qui me suit sans cesse.
Et chaque regard qu'il m'adresse
Semble lui coûter la soupir

Dites-moi quelle ardeur le presse,
Est-ce un peine? Est-ce un plaisir?
Je le crains and ne puis le fuir
Il m'inquiète et m'intéresse.
J'ai beau languir, gémir, souffrir.
Je chéris jusqu'à ma tristesse,

Dites-moi d'où naît ma faiblesse
Mais gardez-vous de m'en guérir.

*other than your funereal beams
You who see my broken heart,
Father of daylight! Oh Sun, Oh my father!
I no longer wish the gift that Castor has lost,
And I renounce the light.*

*I do not know what tedium is pressing me
Is it a pain? Is it a pleasure?
I can not see without blushing
A Shepherd who follows me constantly.
And in every look he is addressing me
Seems to cost him a sigh*

*Tell me what ardor press him,
Is it a pain? Is it a pleasure?
I fear him & I cannot escape
He worries me and interests me.
Even languish, moan, suffer.
I cherish until my sadness,*

*Tell me where my weakness is born
But beware of cure myself*

AKSEL RYKKVIN

Norwegian treble Aksel Rykkvin (b. 2003) recorded his debut album with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at just twelve years old. *Aksel! Arias by Bach, Handel & Mozart* (2016) was awarded a DIAPASON 'd'Or découverte', and BBC Music Magazine named him as one of the 'six best child prodigies' in classical music. Aksel was nominated as 'Newcomer of the year' at the Spellemannprisen awards in Norway in 2017. Aksel has performed at numerous concerts and festivals all over Norway, including Fjord Classics and Oslo Chamber Music Festival. In 2017, he opened the Stockholm Early Music Festival and performed at the Klassiek op het Amstelveld in Amsterdam. He has performed several times on radio or tv in Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK, including Scandinavia's biggest talkshow, 'Skavlan', and BBC Radio 3 'In tune'. Aksel has sung for the Norwegian Royal family on several occasions, including at the 80 years anniversary party of the King and Queen with a host of European royalty present. He has worked with the Oslo Philharmonic, the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, Arve Tellefsen, Henning Kraggerud, Håvard Gimse, Christian Ihle Hadland, Lars Anders Tomter, Rolf Lislevand,



Sigmund Groven and many more of the most prominent Norwegian orchestras, classical musicians and conductors. Aksel is something of an international phenomenon in social media, with millions of video views on YouTube and Facebook.

At 13 years old Aksel won the Norwegian Music Competition for Youth, which is open to classical musicians and singers up to age 22.

Aksel is already a merited soloist at the Norwegian National Opera. The Financial Times described him as “freakishly good” in his first main stage role as ‘the Boy’ in Rolf Wallin’s *Elysium*. He dazzled critics further as ‘Yniold’ in Debussy’s *Pélieas et Mélisande*, a performance that ResMusica called ‘unsurpassable’. In September 2017 Aksel made his international opera debut at Opéra Comique in Paris, as ‘Anthony’ in Katie Mitchell and Raphaël Pichon’s *Miranda*.

Aksel still sings in Oslo Cathedral Boys’ Choir where he started out receiving training as a five-year-old from voice teacher Helene Haarr. When he started singing in the Children’s Chorus of the Norwegian National Opera at the age of ten, Aksel began singing studies with his

present voice teacher Marianne Lewis both in the opera and in the classical music talent class at Majorstuen school in Oslo. Aksel’s voice changed in the autumn of 2017 and he now continues to sing as a baritone, training to pursue a career as a classical and opera singer.

MARK BENNETT

Mark’s interest in the natural trumpet and historical performance practices were first sparked while a student at London’s Royal College of Music. Since then he has gone on to perform and tour with some of the world’s finest period instrument ensembles, including The English Concert (where he is their principal trumpet), The English baroque Soloists and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, as well as with some of the world’s greatest conductors Esa-Pekka Salonen, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Sir Simon Rattle to name a few.

In that time Mark has made a wealth of recordings, from baroque concerti under Trevor Pinnock with The English Concert for Deutsche Gramophone Archiv, to solo recordings of Purcell and Biber’s *Sonatae Tam Aris Quam Audies Sevientes*. Having recorded Bach’s Brandenburg



Concerto No. 2 for the first time at the age of 21 with Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Mark has recorded the work a further 6 times with the likes of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Hanover Band and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. While the baroque trumpet takes up much of Mark’s time, he is no stranger to other types of music making. He has played as principal trumpet with major modern symphony orchestras (London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra), West End Musical orchestras (Andrew Lloyd-Webber’s *Cats* in the West-End), and in over 100 films, including *Shakespeare in Love* and *Stargate*.

As well as now living in Oslo, Mark has established many wonderful relationships with ensembles and artists in Norway, not just as trumpeter, but also as a conductor. Specialising in informed styles of performance, whether on original or modern instruments, Mark has conducted the NRK Radio Orchestra, Barokkanerne, The Norwegian Wind Ensemble and Kongelige Norske Marines Musikkorps amongst many others. Mark and Simon Munday both play baroque trumpets made by Matthew Martin and Norwich Natural trumpets.

The MIN Ensemble

Lazar Miletic *Ensemble Director*

MIN Ensemble is one of Norway's few professional chamber ensembles, and is widely considered to be one of the foremost ensembles in Norway. It is based in the county of Nordland but tours throughout the country as well as abroad.

As a large chamber ensemble (string quintet, wind quintet and piano), MIN Ensemble performs music that is only rarely heard by today's concert audiences. The ensemble also tours with various arrangements and programmes. Its repertoire is dynamic and broad, ranging from early through to contemporary music.

Since its foundation in 1992, the ensemble has been enthusiastically received by audiences and critics both at home and abroad. In 2000 MIN Ensemble took part in the prestigious Palaces of St. Petersburg festival. In 2002 the ensemble undertook a highly successful tour of the Czech Republic and also visited Germany (Sächsisch Böhmisches Musik Festival). In 2003 MIN Ensemble was one of the principal performers at the Nordic Komponistmøte Nordkalotten (North Calotte Composers Convention).



MIN Ensemble's previous CD *Party Music* consists of contemporary music, and received great critical acclaim in the national radio and newspapers in Norway. Their first CD was recorded for the globally distributed label Marco Polo. The ensemble's other CD production, *Arctic Contrasts*, was released in 2000.

MIN Ensemble is part of Music in Nordland, a department of Nordland County Council.

Lazar Miletic is widely recognized as one of Serbia's most exciting young viola talents. Born in Kragujevac, Serbia in 1990 Lazar was a gifted child giving his first concert at the age of 10. As soloist on viola he debuted with Dusan Skovran String Orchestra from Serbia. During his studies he was awarded the prize from "Meri Zezelj" foundation as the most distinguished string player. His artistic achievements and contributions have garnered numerous national and international prizes. Lazar graduated in the class of Panta Velickovic and continued his studies with one of today's most outstanding violists, Lars Anders Tomter.

Lazar's versatility lies in the fact that he plays the viola with the same energy whether he performs as a soloist or chamber musician. In the Swedish chamber orchestra Musica Vitae he led the viola section for two years, and since 2016 he has been Artistic Leader and Director of MIN ensemble. Lazar participates in many international festivals all over the world as a soloist and with his ensemble.

The MIN Ensemble

Mark Bennett

Conductor and Baroque Trumpet 1

Atle Sponberg

Violin solo

Øivind Nussle

Violin

Maren Elle

Violin

Lazar Miletic

Viola and MiN artistic leader

Gunnar Hauge

Cello solo

Hans-Urban Andersson

Cello

Jørgen Skogmo

Lute and Theorbo

Knut Johannessen

Harpsichord

Fredrik Blikeng

Contrabass

Ingrid Åhlander Bennett

Bassoon 1

Embrik Snerte

Bassoon 2

Jørgen Fasting

Oboe and Cor Anglais

Marianne Svenning

Oboe and Cor Anglais

Simon Munday

Baroque Trumpet 2

Karoline Bjørhei

Timpani

Lynetta Taylor Hansen

Baroque Flute



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'Rykkvin is certainly a treble worth preserving – a mature, musical performer whose unbroken voice offers a fascinating alternative take on much of the familiar repertoire recorded here ... The music here is carefully chosen – not just textually but musically appropriate for so young a performer.' **Gramophone**

Recorded from 4th to 7th July 2017 in Jar Church, Bærum, Norway
Producer, Recording Engineer & Editor – Sean Lewis

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