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I FURIOSI Baroque Ensemble is one of world's most innovative Baroque ensembles, comprised of four of Canada's leading early music specialists: soprano Gabrielle McLaughlin, violinists Aislinn Nosky and Julia Wedman, and cellist/gambist Felix Deak.

For almost a decade, I FURIOSI's Toronto concert series has been revitalising the face of early music in Canada, inspired by the practice of the Baroque era while invoking the "bizarre and unnatural" aesthetic both cherished and despised in its time. The ensemble just returned from a tour of Ireland, where they played at the Galway Early Music Festival. The ensemble has also toured Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. I FURIOSI's debut CD *Defiled is my (Middle) Name* (2005) continues to gain international recognition and acclaim, and the ensemble has recently completed a new CD with the *Dorian* label to be released in the fall of 2008.

Gabrielle McLaughlin – Soprano

Soprano Gabrielle McLaughlin currently maintains a large vocal studio in Toronto. In demand as a voice teacher and stylistic coach, Gabrielle lives in Toronto with her two children. In the past, Gabrielle has worked with Tafelmusik, Arbor Oak Trio and The Elmer Iseler Singers. She can be found gracing the stage with Arcady, Les Violons du Roy and La Chappelle de Québec as well as her primary ensemble I FURIOSI Baroque Ensemble, of which she is a founding member and programming coordinator. Gabrielle is heard frequently on CBC and BBC radio.

Felix Deak – 'cello and viola da gamba

'Cello and viola da gambist Felix Deak is one of the rare musicians who had an instant affinity and love for baroque music at an early age. As one of the only undergraduates specializing in Early Music at the University of Toronto, Felix founded I FURIOSI Baroque Ensemble with soprano Gabrielle McLaughlin. Felix also studied at the International Baroque Institute at Longy and the Amherst Baroque Academy. He has been influenced by Christina Mahler, Michael McCraw, Jed Wentz and most recently, Susie Napper, with whom he will be doing an

intensive study on the viola da gamba in 2009 after winning a prestigious Chalmers Grant from the Ontario Arts Council. He has performed and recorded with a great variety of ensembles in Canada and Europe including Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Opera Atelier, Theatre of Early Music, Aradia Baroque Ensemble, Arion Baroque Orchestra, Nota Bene Period Orchestra and Musica ad Rhenum. In addition to performing, Felix is a deeply committed teacher. He is on the faculty of the Toronto District School Board, maintains a private studio, and can be found coaching in the summertime at the Downtown Summer Strings program.

Aisslinn Nosky – Violin

Violinist Aisslinn Nosky works in Toronto as a soloist and chamber musician. Her many distinguished chamber ensembles include I FURIOSI Baroque Ensemble, the Kirby String Quartet and the Eybler String Quartet. I FURIOSI's recording *Defiled is my (Middle) Name* was released to critical acclaim in December of 2005 and the Eybler String Quartet's recording Joseph Leopold Edler von Eybler String Quartets is available through the Analekta label. Aisslinn is a native of Nanaimo, B.C., and received her early training with Heilwig von Koenigsloew at the Nanaimo Conservatory. Known for her vivacious interpretation of music, Aisslinn has been a core member of Tafelmusik since 2005.

Julia Wedman - Violin

Violinist Julia Wedman brings an “infectious vitality” to music (Times Colonist, Victoria Canada) and her playing has been described as “extraordinarily intuitive” (Globe and Mail, Canada). Originally from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, she studied at the University of Western Ontario, the University of Toronto and Indiana University at Bloomington. Julia is one of the newest members of internationally renowned Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, and is quickly becoming known for her solo performances with the group. She is featured regularly on the orchestra's Toronto concert series and on recent tours in Canada, the U.S.A., Puerto Rico, Germany, China and Korea. She is also featured on the orchestra's latest Juno-nominated recording of Vivaldi's *L'Estro Armonico*. Julia can be heard on many Naxos recordings of the Toronto Camerata and Aradia Baroque Ensemble, with whom she was concertmaster for many

projects. Julia oversees I FURIOSI's recordings, and enjoyed many long hours at the Sonoluminus studio in Virginia. In her spare time, she loves to perform with her string quartets - the Eybler String Quartet, period performance specialists who perform rarely heard classical works and the dynamic Kirby String Quartet, who play everything from Purcell to John Zorn.



Stephanie Martin was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Music at York University, Toronto, in July 2004. She teaches harpsichord and organ, Gregorian Chant, Renaissance Music, Sacred Music and Art, and two courses on J.S. Bach. In January 2007 Stephanie became Director of Music at the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Toronto in addition to her duties as conductor of Toronto's *Pax Christi Chorale*, an 85-voice oratorio choir who perform masterworks with full orchestra and professional soloists.

Professor Martin was Director of Music at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Toronto for eleven years. The award-winning *Calvin Choir* undertook several concert tours including a Scottish odyssey with moving performances in St. Giles' Cathedral and isolated Iona Abbey. Stephanie was harpsichordist of *Arbor Oak Trio* for 15 years, and performs on several CDs on the *Naxos* label including a disc of modern harpsichord and guitar duets by Ponce, and with *Aradia Ensemble*. Currently she performs with *Recordare* ensemble, a renaissance wind trio currently touring Universities. She is a frequent guest continuo player with I FURIOSI and she performs on and helped produce their CD.

Winner of the Lillian Forsythe Award for Church Music and Leslie Bell Choral Conducting Prize, Stephanie has continued her musical studies in Paris, London, Venice and the USA. She has toured Eastern Europe and China as assistant conductor to Howard Dyck with *Consort Caritatis*. Ms. Martin is also a published composer and arranger. She is a fan of theatre and visual art, and dabbles in Celtic harp, baseball, chess, yoga and Scottish Country Dancing.

James Johnstone studied organ and harpsichord at the Guildhall School of Music, London and The Hague Conservatory, Holland. For some seventeen years he has been a principal keyboardist in the *Gabrieli Consort and Players* and as such has contributed as both soloist and continuo player to 22 of their recordings.

He has made solo discs of Blow, Gibbons, Bach, Pasquini and Cornet which have all been unanimously acclaimed and have won various awards including the Deutsche Schallplattenkritik prize and Classic CD Critic's Choice of the Year.

In recent years James Johnstone has given recitals in Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Poland, Denmark, Iceland, Spain, Israel and Colombia. He is a core member of the chamber ensemble *Florilegium* since 2001 and also performs regularly with *London Baroque*, *Sonnerie* and *Trinity Baroque*. James teaches early keyboards at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and at Trinity College of Music in London, and has given masterclasses in Europe and the States.

Lucas Harris has been pleased to call Toronto home since January 2004. Originally from Phoenix, Arizona, he graduated from Pomona College in Claremont, California before going abroad to study early music in Italy and Germany. He then spent five years based in New York City during which he directed *Common Ground Ensemble*, took lessons with plucked-string guru Pat O'Brien, and traveled as a freelance continuo player. Lucas has worked with *The Harp Consort*, *Apollo's Fire*, *New York Collegium*, *Smithsonian Chamber Players*, *Les voix humaines*, the *Boston Early Music Festival orchestra*, and many other groups. During breaks in his theorbo-playing schedule, Lucas delves into the sublime repertoire of the Baroque lute. Lucas enjoys teaching during the summer at the *Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute* as well as *Oberlin Conservatory's Baroque Performance Institute*, where he directs an opera scene project each summer. A former instructor for the *New York Continuo Collective*, he formed the *Toronto Continuo Collective* as a sister organization in 2005 together with harpsichordist Borys Medicky.

Crazy

Don Quixote de La Mancha is an eccentric fictional character invented by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (a Spanish novelist and madman) in the early 17th century. Quixote is so taken with the knights he has read of in great lore that he convinces himself that he himself is such a knight and rides out on his skinny old horse in search of adventure. Cervantes draws on the adventures of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, and Quixote happily falls into the depths of lunacy. The old man dies, however, after despondently returning to sanity. In 1694, Thomas D'Urfey (who was called "mad" by the famous diarist Samuel Pepys) wrote his version of *The Comical History of Don Quixote*, which was set to music by a team of his contemporaries. **Jonathan Eccles**, a renowned theatre composer, helped set some of the madsongs from the text – *I burn, my Brain Consumes to Ashes* being perhaps the maddest of them all. **Godfrey Finger** was set to work on some of the more incidental music, such as the love songs and scene changes. The play was performed between 1694 and 1696, but the text is now largely missing.

Every Baroque composer worth his salt wrote a version of *Les Folies D'Espagne*, or *La Follia* or some variant of Folly. The ground bass is a repeated pattern which allows for any number of deviations to occur, thus creating variations, some of which can be truly crazy. I FURIOSI has chosen to record the adaptations by **Antonio Vivaldi** and **Andrea Falconieri**.

Georg Friedrich Handel was considered a bit dangerous and nuts in his day. When he wasn't getting into sword fights with ex-lovers, he was storming about raving at his copyists while they tried to print out trio sonatas. He wrote Cleopatra's aria *Piangerò la Sorte Mia* to reflect her insanity at being imprisoned and at her authority being challenged. She goes berserk and gets mighty angry.

Not much, if anything, is known of Venetian composer **Dario Castello**, but he could write a crazy trio sonata.

Dr. Thomas Augustine Arne was a well-known whacko of the Baroque. His wife refused to live with him because of his wild behaviour, while he described her as having "passions,

equal to raving madness”. He wrote incidental music for a late production of Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* during their mentally enforced separation.

Marco Uccellini is known for his difficult virtuosic writing for the violin, and his extreme use of chromaticisms in pieces. *La Lucimonia Contenta* expresses a wild and manic sort of happiness.

Alessandro Stradella was a successful composer of operas, and had produced a great number of his own pieces in Venice when the first attempt on his life was made. His incessant womanising led to the next attempt on his life, from which he took a great deal of time to recover. Finally, in 1682, the Lomellini brothers (whose sister he had seduced) managed to complete the task that others had begun some years earlier, and Stradella was murdered in Genoa.

Francesco Maria Veracini was the real thing. Nuttier than a nutloaf, he once got in a fight with another composer and a singer and wound up leaping from a window on the third floor of a theatre. He locked himself in rooms, caused shipwrecks and generally wreaked havoc on Europe. But he sure could play the violin.

Tobias Hume was known as a solitary crazed genius, and wrote his viola da gamba *solo Deth* in a moment of solitary insanity.

John Blow made only one foray into the world of the madsong. *Lysander I Pursue* is written from the perspective of Belinda, a delusional and infatuated woman who fancies herself the God of Love. Lysander seems to be safely tucked away before her tirade begins.

Lyrics

I Burn, My Brain Consumes to Ashes

I burn, I burn, my Brain consumes to Ashes;
Each Eye-ball too, like Lightning flashes:
Within my Breast, there glows a solid Fire,
Which in a Thousand Ages can't expire.

Blow, blow, the Wind's great Ruler;
Bring the Po and the Ganges hither,
'Tis sultry, sultry Weather;
Pour 'em all on my Soul,
It will hiss like a Coal,
But never be the cooler.

'Twas Pride, hot as Hell,
That first made me Rebell,
From Love's awful Throne, a curst Angel I fell:
And mourn now the Fate,
Which my self did create;
Fool, fool, that consider'd not when I was well.
Adieu, adieu, transporting Joys,
Off ye vain fantastick Toys,
That dress'd the Face and Body to allure;
Bring, bring me Daggers, Poyson, Fire,
For Scorn is turn'd into Desire;
All Hell feels not the Rage which I, poor I, endure.

-Thomas D'Urfey

To Fair Fidele's Grassy Tomb

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each op'ning sweet, of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear,
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove:
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No wither'd witch shall here be seen,
No goblins lead their nightly crew:
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

The redbreast oft at ev'ning hours
Shall kindly lend his little aid:
With hoary moss, and gather'd flow'rs,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.
When howling winds, and beating rain,
In tempests shake the sylvan cell,
Or midst the chase on ev'ry plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell.

Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
For thee the tear be duly shed:
Belov'd, till life could charm no more;
And mourn'd, till Pity's self be dead.

-William Collins

Piangerò

E pur così in un giorno
perdo fasti e grandezze? Ahi fato rio!
Cesare, il mio bel nume, è forse estinto;
Cornelia e Sesto inermi son, né sanno
darmi soccorso. O dio!
Non resta alcuna speme al viver mio.

Piangerò la sorte mia,
sì crudele e tanto ria,
finché vita in petto avrò.
Ma poi morta d'ogn'intorno
il tiranno e notte e giorno
fatta spettro agiterò.

Piangerò – translation

Thus, in a single day,
Must I lose ceremony and greatness ? Alas, wicked fate !
Caesar, my godlike beloved, is probably dead,
Comeiia and Sextus are defenceless
And cannot come to my aid. O gods!
There is no hope left to my life.

I shall lament my fate,
So cruel and so pitiless,
As long as I have breath in my breast.
But when I am dead
My ghost will, wherever he may be,
Torment the tyrant by night and by day.

While I with Wounding Grief

While I with wounding grief did look,
When love had turn'd your brain
From you the dire disease I took
And bore myself the pain.

Marcella, then, your lover prize,
And be not too severe;
Use well the conquests of your eyes,
For pride has lost your dear.
Ambrosio treats your flames with scorn,
And racks your tender mind;
Withdraw your frowns, and smiles return,
And pay him in his kind.

Yet smile again where smiles are due,
And my true love esteem:
For I much more do rage for you
Than you can burn for him.

-Thomas D'Urfey

Suzanne

Suzanne takes you down to her place near the river,
You can hear the boats go by,
You can spend the night beside her
And you know that she's half crazy
But thats why you want to be there
And she feeds you tea and oranges
That come all the way from China

And just when you mean to tell her
That you have no love to give her
Then she gets you on her wavelength,
And she lets the river answer
That you've always been her lover.
And you want to travel with her,
And you want to travel blind
And you know that she will trust you,
For you've touched her perfect body with your mind.

And Jesus was a sailor
When He walked upon the water,
And he spent a long time watching
From his lonely wooden tower
And when he knew for certain
Only drowning men could see him,
He said "All men will be sailors then
Until the sea shall free them."
But he himself was broken,
Long before the sky would open
Forsaken, almost human,
He sank beneath your wisdom like a stone.
And you want to travel with him,
And you want to travel blind,
And you think maybe you'll trust him,
For he's touched your perfect body with his mind.

Now Suzanne takes your hand,
And she leads you to the river.

She is wearing rags and feathers
From Salvation Army counters
And the sun pours down like honey
On our lady of the harbour
And she shows you where to look
Among the garbage and the flowers.
There are heroes in the seaweed,
There are children in the morning,
They are leaning out for love,
And they will lean that way forever
While Suzanne holds the mirror.
And you want to travel with her,
And you want to travel blind,
And you know that you can trust her,
For she's touched your perfect body with her mind.

-Leonard Cohen

Susanna

Ohimè lassa e perché tremo,
Di che temo,
S'io son pur casta?
Ciò non basta
Per liberarmi,
Se con nuova crudeltà
Mi condanna a morir la mia beltà.

Susanna – translation

Alas, and why do I tremble,
What do I fear
If I am chaste?
That is not enough
To free me,
If with strange cruelty
My beauty condemns me to death.

Lysander I Pursue

Lysander I pursue in vain;
Cruel Lysander, thus to fly me,
Belinda never must obtain,
Who is so great, will still deny me.

But am I not the God of Love?
Bring my trusty arms:
Weak beauty must successless prove;
This dart has stronger charms.

Ah! Feeble arms and hurtless dart!
Nothing Belinda can prevail,
Alas, what hopes to wound a heart
Arm'd with a double coat of mail?

She that could noble conquests boast
Now falls a victim to disdain and shame.
Belinda is forever lost;
Mad that I loved and not suppressed the flame.

See, now it rises to the sky,
And turns a blazing star;
The frightened earth looks pale and cries:
It threatens universal war.

Two armies already join battle above:
The God of War fights the God of Love.
Stand firm my battalions; the tyrant shall yield;
My reserve of wing'd archers will carry the field.

They fly, smite, flank and rear.
So now will I storm yon castle in the air,
The chariot of the sun in my rage overturning;
Consume the whole world, since Belinda's a-burning.

-John Blow











