

scenes and musick' cost the unprecedented sum of three thousand pounds. The play was an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, adding an ambitious series of masques and dances. Some of these additions were relevant to the sylvan setting of the original—there were dances for fairies, swans and wild men—while the finale indulged the fashion for the exotic by including monkeys and Chinese dancers. Tonight's suite has been assembled from the many instrumental movements, including the Prelude that acted as a curtain-raiser, suave dances such as the Chaconne and Rondeau, and the high-spirited Hornpipe and Jig. We also hear an instrumental version of the bittersweet, arching melody of *If love's a sweet passion*. This suite offers a mere taste of the theatrical pageantry that so appealed to the audiences of the 1690s.

Within two decades of the triumphant premiere of *The Fairy Queen*, however, the theatrical taste of fickle Londoners had changed utterly. Now the entertainment of choice was Italian opera, sung by imported divas and castrati; lively English dances were replaced by the elegant mythology and sophisticated plots of the Italian pastoral, and English composers were overshadowed by George Frideric Handel, who from his arrival in 1710 was keen to tap the potential of the London opera-houses. He wrote *Orlando* for the 1733 season, at a time when his operatic success had dwindled in the face of rivalry between theatrical companies. The opera tells of Orlando's unrequited love for Angelica, Queen of Cathay, and his anger when she rejects him in favour of the young African soldier Medoro. Tonight we hear some of Angelica's arias from the first half of the drama. In *Chi possessore* she declares her love for Medoro and sweeps away his protestations of unworthiness with an unconstrained, flowing melody. But she cannot bring herself to break the news immediately to Orlando, instead pretending in *Se fedel* that she would love him if only he could prove the purity of his feelings for her; here the edgy, jerking rhythms betray her emotional dissembling. Later Angelica resolves to leave with Medoro for Cathay, and in *Verdi piante* she regretfully bids farewell to her beloved woods. Her vocal line hovers wistfully, while the recorders add a pastoral note.

A more intimate drama is represented by Purcell's *Suite from Dido and Aeneas*. Unlike *The Fairy Queen* or *Orlando*, this miniature opera was not written for the public theatre but was originally performed at private venues. Nonetheless it still includes sequences of dances for some of the stock figures of the Restoration stage. There is a crew of bawdy sailors who 'take a boozy short leave' of their 'nymphs on the Shore'. And there is a coven of witches which brews up storms and spells, no doubt causing shivers in an audience for whom witch-hunts were still a close memory. The focus of the opera, however, is Dido, Queen of Carthage, whose love is thwarted by the witches' scheming and who dies of a broken heart. Her tragedy is encapsulated in the lament that she sings when about to be 'laid in earth'. Here Purcell amply demonstrates his 'peculiar Genius to express the Energy of English Words'. He has a perfect ear for the rhythms of English speech, stylising them to produce his favourite dotted figures, and creating a vocal line that enhances the meaning of the words in a glorious melodic outpouring.

Although dramatic music was the mainstay for London composers in the eighteenth century, there was also much demand for instrumental pieces to open the evening at the theatre or to play in the burgeoning concert-rooms. Handel often liked to impress an audience with a concerto, and in September 1739 he wrote his Op 6 Concerti Grossi for the forthcoming winter season. Handel was famed for his fluent and fast composition, but he seems to have written these concertos with particular seriousness, devoting a month to writing the set of twelve. Perhaps he was trying to match the fame of another composer's Op 6: Arcangelo Corelli's renowned set of concertos that had been published in 1714. Indeed Handel's *Concerto No 2 in F major* mingles Corellian with Handelian fingerprints. There are graceful melodies that unfurl over a gentle walking-bass, urgent anapaest rhythms (two unaccented syllables followed by an accented one) in the Allegro, and a fugal finale based on a pithy subject. The third movement is a nod to Corelli, with constant contrasts between different tempos and between the trio of soloists and the full band.



Composers in the English Baroque usually looked to the theatre for their main income, as with the case of both Purcell and Handel. By contrast, in our own secularised age, John Tavener has achieved uncanny success with an output steeped in the rituals of the Greek Orthodox Church. *Song of the Angel* is a setting for solo soprano and violin of a single word, 'Alleluia'. In contrast to Purcell's attention to the 'Energy of English words', Tavener isolates the vowels in his text and extends them into long melismas for the sake of sheer ritualistic sound. As he has written of this piece, quoting Coomaraswamy: 'Like all the music of the East, it should reveal in tranquillity an eternal, angelic, ecstatic breath which liberates and humanises'.

*Eternity's Sunrise* takes a poem by William Blake where the simplest earthly things—a grain of sand or a wild flower—inspire joy at the inexpressible riches of divine creation. Again Tavener uses the vowels in the text to create swooping, ethereal melismas. He intersperses Blake's words with an Alleluia refrain that grows more climactic with each iteration and is eventually accompanied by full string orchestra and handbells. Through this shimmering radiance he strives to capture the inexpressible force of eternity. Stephen Rose © 2003

#### The Academy of Ancient Music

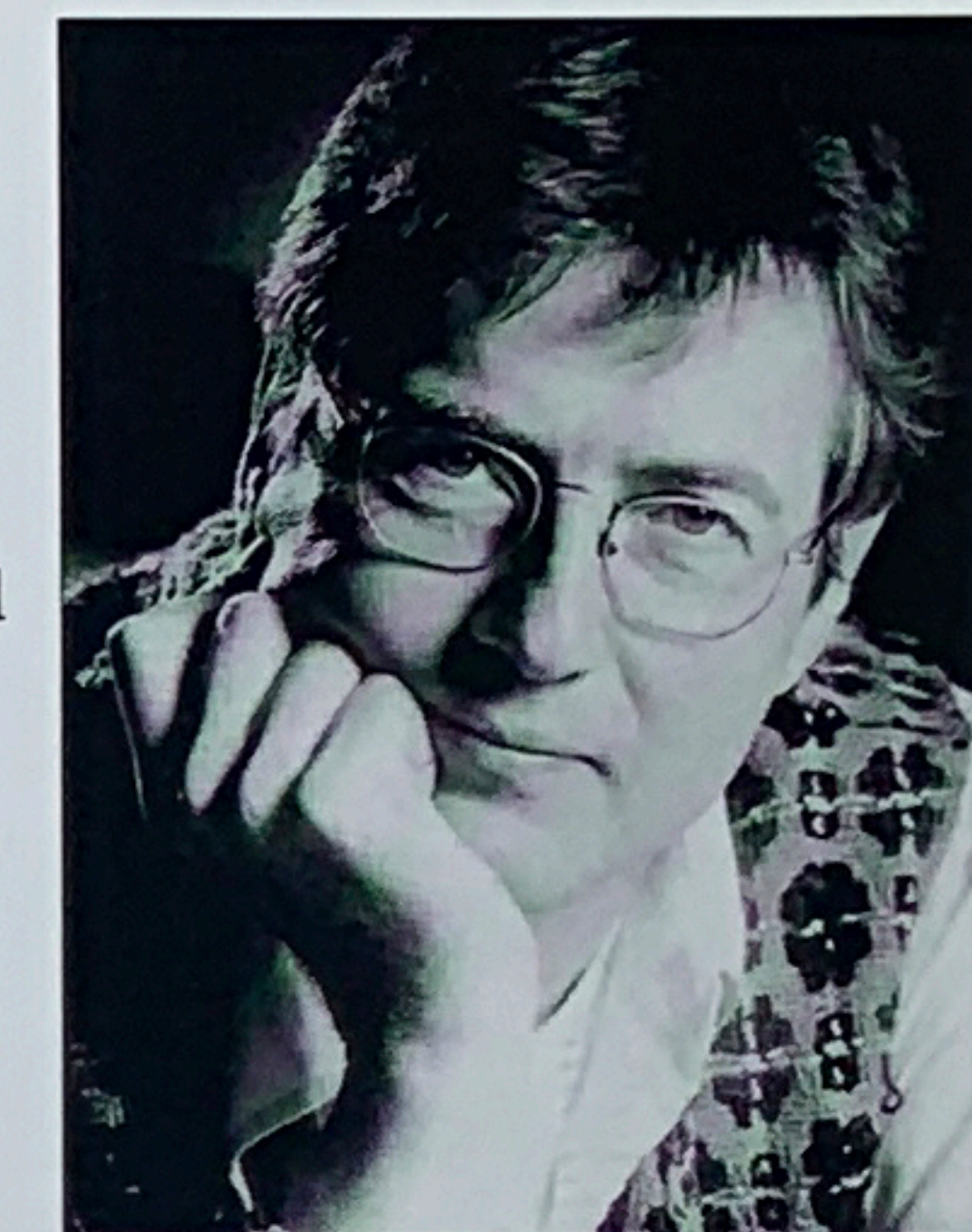
The original Academy of Ancient Music was established in 1726 for the purpose of studying and performing 'old' music – defined initially as music composed at least a century earlier, but soon to include more contemporary composers, most notably Handel. The modern revival of The Academy, founded by Christopher Hogwood in 1973, created one of the first period-instrument orchestras and is now renowned worldwide for its concerts and over 250 recordings of music from the Baroque, Classical and early Romantic eras. In 1996 the artistic directorship of The AAM was extended with the appointment of Paul Goodwin as Associate Conductor and Andrew Manze as Associate Director.

The commissioning of new works under Paul Goodwin represents a new development for the orchestra. The first commission and recording, John Tavener's *Eternity's Sunrise*, met with enthusiastic critical acclaim and led to a second new Tavener work and recording, *Total Eclipse*. The AAM's next commission is from Thea Musgrave in 2005.

Summer 2003 includes a performance at the BBC Proms and a major concert in Vienna replicating a mammoth Beethoven benefit concert of 1808.

#### Paul Goodwin

Paul Goodwin began his musical career as an oboist, with an interest in contemporary music, before turning to period instruments, in which field he was recognised as one of the leading Baroque oboists of his generation. This breadth of musical interest is evident in his conducting career over the last decade, which spans Monteverdi and Tavener. Goodwin divides his time between opera productions and concert performances; he is also Principal Guest Conductor of the English Chamber Orchestra.



#### Patricia Rozario

'For much of the last decade, Tavener – exotic, esoteric, devoted to Greek Orthodoxy and recently anointed 'the world's most famous composer' – has been writing with one specific voice in mind. The voice belongs to Patricia Rozario...She has been the inspiration for more than a dozen pieces. .... Together they make a distinctly odd couple. Yet together they also make one of the most successful partnerships in contemporary British music.' The Sunday Times



Born and educated in Bombay, Patricia Rozario won a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Here she studied under Walter Gruner, and was awarded the Maggie Teyte Prize and the Gold Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Patricia Rozario has performed on the operatic stage in the UK and Europe, including appearances with English National Opera and Opera North. She has also appeared in recital and concert at many festivals, including Aldeburgh and Edinburgh, and was part of Hermann Prey's *Schubertiade* on London's South Bank.

Patricia Rozario was awarded the OBE in 2001 for her services to music.

