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## Town and Country

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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## PROGRAM NOTES

by **John Moran**

**GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN**

(1681–1767)

**Ouverture “Les Nations anciens et modernes” in G Major,**

**TWV55:G4** (ca. 1725)

Georg Philipp Telemann was, from 1722 until his death, at the helm of Hamburg’s musical establishment, the leading figure in the city’s musical life in church, theater, and commerce, an area particularly dear to this thriving Hanseatic city.Among his many diverse interests in composition was a fascination with the musical representation of anything imaginable. Such bravado in tone painting presages Richard Strauss’s boast, made 200 years later, about his own prodigious skill, claiming that he could not only write music that would realistically portray the taste of beer, but that the listener would know whether it was a pilsner or a lager.Telemann never quite made such a claim, but he showed no lack of daring in the range of the different themes he expressed through music. His droll suite *Les Nations anciens et modernes* on the surface portrays only three peoples, the Germans, the Swedes, and the Danes. In contrast to other works of the period, such as Campra’s opera *Europe galante* or Couperin’s set of pieces *Les nations*, Telemann has made no effort to pick groups that would show the greatest contrasts or that could be thought of as coming from the four corners of the earth. He instead limited himself to his own nation; Denmark, the foreign country closest to him in Hamburg; and its immediate neighbor, Sweden.Was he trying to prove his powers of characterization by making distinctions in music that would seem no less challenging than portraying the flavors of different beers, or was this written for some sort of special state occasion? We no longer know.

However, a closer look shows that two more nations are being contrasted. For each nation, Telemann wrote a contrasting pair of movements, one ancient and one modern. In each case the modern movement is labeled “fast,” the ancient one presumably being slower, heavier, and perhaps a little tired. It also seems that he is contrasting the older French style with the more up-to-date Italian style.While Telemann did not explicitly title this suite a burlesque, the farcical final movement portraying “old women” surely ought to qualify it as one.

In the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras Augsburg played an important social, economic, and cultural role. From the 14th century it was home to the Fuggers, predecessors to modern financiers. In 1530 it was the site of the declaration of the *Confessio augustana* (the Augsburg Confession), the normative document that sits at the foundation of all Lutheran Protestantism. In 1756, the same year his famous son was born, Leopold Mozart published his very influential *Violin-Schule* in Augsburg. In the late 17th century,Augsburg was also an important center in the development of the German dance suite. Three different composers, Scheffelhut, Fischer, and Schmierer, all published significant collections of dance suites in that city.

**JACOB SCHEIFFELHUT** (1647–1709) **Suite no. VI in C Major** (1685)

Jacob Scheffelhut was born in Augsburg and died in that same city 300 years ago. He learned the musician’s trade while a student in the Kantorei of St. Anna in Augsburg and became a member of the Stadtpfeifer guild there. In 1673 he received an appointment as instrumentalist on both string and wind instruments at the St. Anna school. His duties would have included giving lessons and composing music for special occasions in addition to his appearances as performer. On the death of his superior, Georg Schmezer, he failed to gain promotion to the top position at the school. From 1694 until his death he served as choir director at the Barfüsserkirche. He had a good reputation as a teacher and as a composer, especially of instrumental music, which in its day was acclaimed well beyond Augsburg. His surviving instrumental works comprise three collections of suites for strings and continuo published in Augsburg in 1684, 1685, and 1707.The title page of his second collection reads:*Lieblicher Frühlungs-Anfang oder Musikalischer Seyten-Klang welcher unter deß Auges anmuthiger Blumen-Schau deß Geruches empfindender Balsam-Duft auch dem Gehör in Praeludien, Allemanden, Couranten, Ballo, Sarabanden, Arien und Gigueu, annehmlichen fällt* (Spring’s Mellifluous Arrival or the Musical Sound of Strings; preludes, allemandes, courantes, balli, sarabandes, arias, and giges to reach the ear pleasantly alongside the season’s charming visual display of flowers and its delightful aroma of balsam).

In the eight suites of his *Lieblicher Frühlungs-Anfang*, Scheffelhut develops his own large form. He supplements the standard dance movements of the suite (allemande, courante, sarabande, gigue) with a prelude (usually in two or more sections), a ballo, and an aria so that he can alternate duple time movements with triple time movements throughout the suite. He is also harmonically and tonally more daring than most of his contemporaries. The keys of the individual suites run through a colorful sequence: D minor, B minor, E major,A minor, F minor, C major, E-flat major, F-sharp major. It is no wonder that he was held in such high regard.

**JOHANN CASPAR FERDINAND FISCHER** (1670–1746)

**Ouverture no. 4 in D Minor** (1695)

Though born and raised in Bohemia, Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer worked primarily in Baden and Rastatt in the westernmost part of Germany along the French border. It is no surprise that his music is indebted to the Lully style of the French court. His 1695 collection *Le journal du printemps* (Spring Journal) was published as his op. 1 in Augsburg and dedicated to his patron, Ludwig, the Margrave of Baden.The eight suites of this collection are typical of the French style, and though they are composed of familiar dance types, the stereotypical dances of the later German dance suite (allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue) are not used to anchor these suites. However, the French influence is clear from the dance titles in French and the five-part instrumentation, where the three middle voices would have been taken by violas, probably of different sizes, with the individual lines given their French names: *dessus, hautecontre, taille, quinte, basse*. Fischer was influential, as shown by the mention of his name in lexica of the day and in Schmierer’s introduction to his *Zodiaci musici*. Fischer is today best remembered for his *Ariadne musica* (1702), a collection of 20 preludes and fugues in all 18 of the different major and minor keys then available.This collection was a precursor to Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* which, thanks to a later temperament, was able to expand the concept to cover all 24 major and minor keys and in which Bach adapted some of Fischer’s thematic material.

**JOHANN ABRAHAM SCHMIERER** (1661–1719)

**Ouverture no. 4 in B Minor** (1698)

Johann Abraham Schmierer was accepted as a treble into the Augsburg cathedral choir in 1673 and was released from the position

in 1680, aged approximately 19. He was able to pursue study in philosophy and law at the University of Augsburg. His only surviving work is part I of his *Zodiaci musici*, the first six partitas of what was supposed to be a set of twelve.The individual partitas are numbered but not named, so it is impossible to know which one would correspond to which sign of the zodiac. He specifies that these pieces are for violin band, to which harpsichord could be added, and he asserts that they are written in the newest style. He suggests that when the forces are available, it is good to double or even quadruple the number of players on the top and bass parts. It is fascinating that, while his musical style seems beholden to the current French taste, he writes in four-part texture rather than the five parts that were more typical of the French style. Additionally, he largely shuns the use of French, giving his title page in Latin and German and using Italian instrument names. Only the titles of the individual movements are in French. In the introduction to part I of his *Zodiaci* he refers to Fischer’s “*Journal du prim temps*.” Publication of part II was announced in 1710, but no copy survives.

**GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL** (1685–1759)

**Concerto grosso op. 6, no. 12 in B Minor, HWV 330** (1740)

George Frideric Handel composed the 12 concerti grossi of op. 6 in a brief period of less than two months in the autumn of 1739. Unlike much of his other instrumental music, these 12 concerti were conceived as a set and not just assembled from a variety of existing works, though in some of the concerti he does borrow material from earlier works—for example, from the overture to his *Ode for St. Cecilia’s Day*. These concerti share the same opus number as Corelli’s set of 12 concerti grossi, which were seen as the epitome of the genre. Corelli’s concerti served as an inspiration, though Handel clearly did not try merely to copy the works of his predecessor.As in Corelli’s op. 6, the concertino group of solo instruments is comprised of two violins and a cello with an accompanying four-part tutti. Though not published by Walsh with the string parts to op. 6, Handel also wrote oboe parts to four of the concerti, nos. 1, 2, 5, and 6.Whether these preceded publication or were written later is obscured by the fact that they only survived in a private collection and were not generally accessible until relatively recently. As with Vivaldi’s

*L’Estro armonico* or Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos, each concerto in Handel’s op. 6 has its own form.The Concerto no. 12 in B minor, the final concerto in the set, is a tour de force that weaves together many different threads from Handel’s vast experience.The first movement, which prominently features the cello, has touches reminiscent of the music of Giacobbe Cervetto, the Italian cellist who had moved to London earlier in 1739 and frequently led the cellists in London orchestras.The Aria recalls Handel’s successes as a vocal composer, while the final Allegro, written in the style of a saltarello or a tarantella, might harken back to Handel’s journeyman years in Rome.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Hailed by *The New York Times* as “sophisticated and beguiling” and praised by the *Los Angeles Times* for its “astonishingly vital music-making,” the New York–based Baroque ensemble REBEL (pronounced “Re-BEL”) has earned an impressive international reputation, enchanting diverse audiences by its unique style and virtuosic, highly expressive, and provocative approach to the Baroque and Classical repertoire.

The core formation of two violins, recorder/traverso, cello/viola da gamba, and harpsichord/organ expands with additional strings, winds, theorbo, and vocalists, performing on period instruments. REBEL, through its long-term residency from 1997 to 2009 at historic Trinity Church on Wall Street in New York City, has achieved high acclaim for its collaborations with Trinity Choir in performance, radio broadcasts, webcasts, and recordings with works ranging from the cantatas of Bach to large-scale works by Monteverdi, Handel, Bach, Purcell, Mozart, and Haydn.

Named after the innovative French Baroque composer Jean-Féry Rebel (1666–1747), REBEL was originally formed in the Netherlands in 1991. In the Fifth International Competition for Ensembles in Early Music, Utrecht 1991 (now the Van Wassenaer Competition), REBEL was awarded first prize. Since then the ensemble has performed at European venues such as the Holland Festival Oude Muziek, Tage Alter Musik Berlin, the Konzerthaus (Vienna), La Chapelle Royale (Versailles), Internationale Festtage für Alte Musik Stuttgart, Tage Alter Musik Regensburg, and the Händel Festspiele (Halle an der Saale, Germany), among others.

REBEL has appeared to critical acclaim at distinguished American venues such as the Da Camera Society, the Schubert Club, Friends of Music Kansas City, the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, Library of Congress, Caramoor, Chautauqua Institution, Stanford Lively Arts, University of Chicago Presents, University of Arizona (Tucson) Presents, the Shrine to Music Museum, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Boston and Berkeley Early Music Festivals, and Music Before 1800 in New York City.

REBEL has collaborated with renowned vocalists Max van Egmond, Derek Lee Ragin, Suzie LeBlanc, Daniel Taylor, Marta Almajano, Peter Kooy, and Barbara Schlick; in 2005 REBEL appeared in collaboration with Renée Fleming at Carnegie Hall to critical acclaim. The ensemble has recorded for all the major European national radio networks and has been showcased in performance and interview on BBC’s *Radio 3*.Arguably the most aired American Baroque ensemble in the US today, REBEL has been regularly featured on NPR’s *Performance Today* and MPR’s *St. Paul Sunday*. In 1999 REBEL became the first and only period instrument ensemble to be awarded an artists’ residency at National Public Radio.

REBEL has recorded for Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, Dorian Recordings,ATMA Classique, Hänssler Classic, Bridge Records, Naxos, and Dorian Sono Luminus. REBEL’s highly praised CD on Sono Luminus *Corellisante: Sonatas for Two Violins & Basso Continuo by Corelli & Telemann* was the subject of a feature article in *Chamber Music America Magazine*.

REBEL first gained wide recognition for its acclaimed performance of Mozart’s Requiem with Trinity Choir under the direction of Dr. Owen Burdick, broadcast nationally over National Public Radio in September 2001, and for its annual performances of Handel’s *Messiah* and the choral works of Haydn, which had been broadcast live over WQXR-FM in New York City as well as internationally over the internet.The 8-CD set of the complete sacred choral works of Haydn was released in 2009 on the Naxos label. REBEL’s latest disc, *Telemann: Sonate à Cinque & Quattro*, was released in October 2009 on the Dorian Sono Luminus label. www.REBELbaroque.com.

### Music

### Music

### Music

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Peak Performances @ Montclair presents:

## REBEL Ensemble for Baroque Music

*Town and Country: Music of European Royalty and Aristocracy*

Jörg-Michael Schwarz and Karen Marie Marmer, Directors

Jörg-Michael Schwarz, Karen Marie Marmer,  
 and Margaret Ziemnicka, violins

Risa Browder, violin and viola

Peter Bucknell, viola

John Moran, cello

Anne Trout, bass

Dongsok Shin, harpsichord

### PROGRAM

**Overture "Les Nations anciens et modernes" in G Major, TWV55:G4** Georg Philipp Telemann

2 violins, viola, and basso continuo

Overture • Menuet I & II • Les Allemands anciens • Les Allemands modernes: Vite • Les Suèdes anciens • Les Suèdes modernes: Vite • Les Danois anciens • Les Danois modernes: Vite • Les vieilles femmes

**Suite no. VI in C Major** Jacob Scheffelhut

from *Lieblicher Frühlings-Anfang oder Musikalischer Seyten-Klang*

2 violins, viola, and basso continuo

Präludium: Vivace-Adagio-Vivace • Allemand • Courant • Ballo • Saraband • Aria • Gigue

**Overture no. 4 in D Minor** Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer

from *Le journal du printemps*

violins, 3 violas, and basso continuo

Overture • Entrée • Rondeau • Gavotte • Menuet • Passacaille

~~ Intermission ~~

**Overture no. 4 in B Minor** Johann Abraham Schmierer

from *Zodiaci musici, Pars I*

2 violins, viola, and basso continuo

Overture: Allegro • Allemande • Courante • Sarabande • Bourée • Air • Ballet • Rondeau

**Concerto grosso op. 6, no. 12 in B Minor, HWV 330** George Frideric Handel

2 violins and violoncello solo, strings, and basso continuo

Largo • Allegro • Aria: Largetto e piano-Variatio • Largo • Allegro

Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted inside the theater.

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Credit: Howard Goodman

## REBEL Ensemble for Baroque Music

*Town and Country: Music of European Royalty and Aristocracy*

November 7, 2010 • 3:00pm  
 Alexander Kasser Theater  
 Montclair State University