

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN CONCERT SERIES 2018 – 2019
THE PASSIONATE MARQUISE

ABERDEEN EARLY MUSIC COLLECTIVE
ALONG WITH THREE MEMBERS OF ENSEMBLE MARQUISE

EARLY MUSIC COLLECTIVE:-

DAVID SMITH: Harpsichord

FRAUKE JÜRGENSEN: Soprano

AMANDA BABINGTON: Violin, Recorder and Musette

CLAIRE BABINGTON: Cello

ENSEMBLE MARQUISE:- (Surnames first as in Hungary)

FELSZEGHY JUDIT: Coloratura Soprano and Percussion

BLASKOVICS LÁSZLÓ: Male Soprano

KÁLLAY KATALIN: Recorder

KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL

Thursday 7th February, 2019

Thursday's concert entitled 'The Passionate Marquise' covered a vast range of early music both across time and countries of origin – Italy, France and yes, even Scotland. Six of the composers were familiar to me. They were Monteverdi (ca. 1567 – 1643), Handel (1685 – 1759), Vivaldi (1678 – 1741), Alessandro Scarlatti (1660 – 1725), Lully (1632 – 1687) and I had heard of the Scottish composer William McGibbon (1690 – 1756) possibly from previous Early Music Collective performances over the years. The others needed a little research. Benedetto Ferrari (ca. 1603 – 1681) composer, librettist and theorbo player appears in the programme only because some musicologists claim that the music for *Pur te miro* from Monteverdi's opera *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* may have been borrowed by Monteverdi from Ferrari or else added to the score by a later copyist.

Andrea Falconieri (1585 or 86 – 1656) was a composer and lutenist from Naples. Philippe Dugué (fl. 1734 – 51) is mentioned in a treatise entitled 'The Hurdy-gurdy in Eighteenth Century France'. Pierre Borjon de Scelley (or Scellery?) was a French composer (1633 – 1691) who wrote a work entitled 'Traité de la musette' and Maurizio Cazzati (1616 – 1678) was a North Italian composer who composed some 66 volumes of music.

Thursday's concert was wonderfully entertaining. First of all there were the splendidly colourful Rococo costumes worn by at least three of the performers. Frauke Jürgensen, Judit Felszeghy and László Blaskovics all performed marvellous light footed and elegant dances. I was royally entertained by Frauke Jürgensen's teasingly coquettish acting in the beginning items. She really cheered me up.

I was greatly impressed by recorder player Katalin Kállay. She put not just her face and head but sometimes her whole body into her playing, swaying, gyrating and all but dancing into the lines of her music. Was this overdone? I don't care because in every respect, the sound of her playing was the best I have ever heard on recorder. The detail, the ornaments, the varied dynamics in her playing lifted the entire performance every time she played. The vocal blending of coloratura soprano Judit Felszeghy and male soprano, so clean and clear, László Blaskovics was thoroughly delicious. In her solo singing and in ensembles Frauke Jürgensen was on the top of her form. We were delighted to welcome back Professor David Smith on harpsichord. His playing rang out and sizzled brilliantly in

so much of the music. Claire Babington's fine steady playing in the continuo group was as perfect as ever and her sister Amanda soared magnificently whether on violin in the instrumental quartets, joining with Katalin on second recorder in the Scarlatti or on musette in the Dugué and the Scelley in which she joined with Frauke in music which had a wonderful folksy earthiness. Soprano Judit Felszeghy spiced up so many of the pieces with percussion on drum, castanets, jingle stick and tambourine. One might think that a concert like this could be rather serious, over intellectual in its appeal. Not at all. It did teach me a great deal but at the same time, this was musical entertainment at its very best. I particularly loved the McGibbon, the Vivaldi, the Scarlatti and the Monteverdi at the end of the concert when all the performers came together. My only disappointment was that the audience was rather sparse. A performance like this deserved to have a packed house with standing room only. Perhaps the word will get around and next time...?