

Corelli



Vivaldi's Venice

Corelli Concerts

Using the travel writings of Edward Wright, who visited Venice in 1720/1, this programme explores Venetian life and illustrates it with music written in the city at the time. Wright's *Observations* are full of detail and character:

'Tis a Pleasure, not without a Mixture of Surprize, to see so great a City as *Venice* may be truly call'd, as it were, floating on the Surface of the Sea: to see Chimneys and Towers, where you would expect nothing but Ship-Masts. It stands surround with Waters, at least five Miles distant from any Land; and is thus defended by its fluid Bulwark better than by Wall or Ramparts.

More concerned with the people he meets than the history of the city-state, he has a captivating eye for detail. We learn of the intrigue and potential for mistaken identity at the *Carnaval*; public spectacles in St Mark's square; the customs of the Doges; life of the Jews in the Ghetto, and more. His remarks on Venetian theatre a particularly entertaining:

'Tis very usual there to see Priests playing in the *Orchestra*: the famous *Vivaldi* (whom they call the *Prete rosso*) very well known among us by his Concertoes, was a topping Man among them.

With a small ensemble of 2 violins (or a violin and flute), cello and harpsichord, the music can feature sonatas and concertos by Vivaldi, Marcello, Albinoni, Lotti, Hasse, Gasparini and Galuppi. If desired, harpsichord music by Handel and Scarlatti – who met at the Venetian *Carnaval* in 1709 can be worked into the programme.