



# William Corbett

**CHANNEL CLASSICS**  
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European community  
**Bizzarie Universali**  
baroque orchestra

Roy Goodman *conductor and violin*  
Andrew Manze *violin*

**Panasonic** Europe

## European Community Baroque Orchestra

<i>director and concertino violin I</i>	Roy Goodman
<i>concertino violin II</i>	Andrew Manze
<i>violin I</i>	Frauke Longuet- Higgins Sabine Hoffman Hermelinde de Smet Chiara Coppo
<i>violin II</i>	Margaret Caley Heidi Erbrich Rachael Quinlan Giuditta Colombo
<i>viola</i>	Anja Bölkow Juliet Schiemann
<i>cello</i>	Helen Gough Nicola Kingslake
<i>double bass</i>	Hendrik-Jan Wolfert
<i>harpsichord</i>	Stefano Intrieri Hélène Dufour



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## European Community Baroque Orchestra

The European Community Baroque Orchestra was set up in 1985 as the major initiative of European Music Year to bring together Europe's most talented young Baroque musicians. The ECBO provides orchestral performing experience which is a vital link between conservatoire study and a fully professional career, and offers a unique opportunity for young players to work under the direction of the world's top Baroque specialists.

The activities of the ECBO now follow an annual pattern, beginning with audition courses at which the members of the Orchestra are selected. The courses are run under the direction of a highly integrated team of specialists, which includes Roy Goodman, Jaap ter Linden, Lucy van Dael, Jan Schlapp, Enrico Gatti, Jos van Immerseel, Ku Ebbinge and Marc Vallon. For the successful musicians the next stage is a training course during which intensive rehearsals take place for the forthcoming concert tours and recordings.

After this thorough preparation the Orchestra is then ready to embark on its touring schedule which has taken it to all the European Community countries, with performances in many of the major Festivals in Europe. The ECBO has developed a special relationship with directors *Roy Goodman* and *Ton Koopman* and has worked with most of the world's leading Baroque directors; Frans Brüggen, Trevor Pinnock, Christopher Hogwood, Jordi Savall, Jean-Claude Malgoire, William Christie, Reinhard Goebel, Joshua Rifkin and Andrew Parrott. Highlights have included Festival van Vlaanderen, Brugge; Algarve International Festival; Bachtage, Berlin; Haendel in Oxford Festival; Gulbenkian Early Music Festival, Lisbon; Festival Musica Antiqua Sevilla, Spain; Holland Early Music Festival, Utrecht.

In addition the Orchestra undertakes each year an "ambassadorial" commitment with performances at EG Summits and EC Capitals of Culture, and tours of the USSR and East Germany, for example. Future tours are planned to the USA, Japan and Brazil.

**Roy Goodman** started his musical career as a choir boy in King's College, Cambridge in 1959, and became world-famous for his recording of Allegri's Miserere in which he rendered the choir boy's solo part. From 1971, he took a very active part in education: he was senior music teacher at two schools, supervisor responsible for string classes in Berkshire, director of music at the University of Kent and director of the Early Music department at the Royal Academy of Music. At the moment he is director of the Baroque Orchestra of the European Community (the ECBO).

Roy Goodman has been invited as leader by more than twenty European ensembles which play on authentic instruments and has worked with such renowned conductors as Frans Brüggen, John Eliot Gardiner, Philippe Herreweghe, Sir Charles Mackerras, Richard Hickox, Christopher Hogwood, Ton Koopman, Roger Norrington, Trevor Pinnock and Simon Rattle. He has made many recordings as a soloist, playing the violino piccolo, the viola, the viola d'amore, the organ and the harpsichord.

In the last ten years he has acquired an international reputation as a leader and conductor, and has worked with both authentic and modern instruments. He has conducted more than 60 radio recordings and has been invited as guest conductor by, among others, The Academy of Ancient Music, the CBC Orchestra of Canada, the Scandinavian Baroque Orchestra, the Dutch Bach Society and the German Handel Soloists. In 1986 Roy Goodman became chief conductor of the Hanover Band.

**Andrew Manze** spent three years touring all over the world with the ECBO. At the same time he took his degree in Classics at Cambridge University, founding the young trio sonata ensemble, The Cambridge Musick. A short period of study with Simon Standage resulted in a scholarship from the Dutch government. He came to Amsterdam and worked closely with The Cambridge Musick and with musicians like Gustav Leonardt. Thanks to a grant from the Arts Council of Great Britain, Andrew carried out research on pre-1715 French chamber music and on the origin and development of the Sonata. At the moment he divides his time between The Cambridge Musick, which has numerous international engagements, and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra of Ton Koopman, of which he is the leader.

## William Corbett

William Corbett (c.1675-1748) was one of England's first and most individual composers of concertos. By profession he was a violinist, and between 1705 and 1711 led the orchestra at the new Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, London. He was also in demand as a soloist, often receiving top billing at London benefit concerts, and appearing as far afield as Nottingham (1707 and 1709) and York (1709). Corbett appears to have been something of a *showman*, and his concert programmes and compositions often made a feature of the unusual. In 1699 and 1704-7, for instance, his concerts often included such unfamiliar instruments as the mandolin, archlute and viola d'amore, and in 1724 he advertised a concert '*on a particular new instrument never heard in England*'.

Between 1711 and c.1740 Corbett lived intermittently in Italy, returning occasionally to publish music and perform in concerts, such as those he organised with a Signora Lady in London until 1715. Although nominally attached to the royal orchestra in London, from 1716 he seems to have settled more permanently in Rome, where he built up an extensive collection of music and violins (some said to have belonged to Corelli and Torelli) and other musical instruments. So impressive was this collection and such was his material well-being, that it was speculated whether Corbett augmented his income acting as a *spy* for the English government, keeping an eye on the Pretender to the English throne (James Stewart, son of the deposed Catholic James II) who had settled in Rome. Whatever the truth of such suspicions, Corbett certainly made money from the sale of some of his music and instruments in London in 1724 and shortly after his return to England in 1741.

## Bizzarie Universali

Although not as prolific as many of his Italian contemporaries, by English standards Corbett's output of instrumental music was considerable. Corbett's most interesting and substantial instrumental works were his *Le Bizzarie Universali Op.8*, first published in London in 1728, nine of which are recorded here for the first time. The volume consisted of thirty-five concertos written, as the title-page informs us, '*on all the new Gusto's in his Travels thro' Italy*'. The concertos were issued in several formats, and, typically for the time, with a variety of performance options. The original edition describes them as '*Concerto's, in four Parts For two Violins, Tenor [i.e. viola] & Thro Base for ye Harpsichord*', though recommends that they

may also be 'play'd in 3 parts, 2 Hautboys, Flutes or German-Flutes'. Shortly after, the works were apparently re-issued in three books of 12 concertos for seven instruments, scored for four violins, viola, cello and harpsichord continuo, in which form they were reprinted (with a few minor variations) in 1742. The additional violin parts in these later editions are in fact no more than written-out *ripieno* parts, which facilitated easier performance of the works as *concerti grossi*, where instead of being played by a single group of four-part strings, the music was shared between a solo trio of two violins and cello (the *concertino*) and the full four-part string ensemble (the *ripieno*)

Bizzarries, in the sense of strange, whimsical and extravagant, exactly captures the character of this, one of the most individual concerto publications of the eighteenth century. In each concerto Corbett endeavours to imitate a particular musical style, either national or local, and thus each work is separately titled: *Alla Romana*, *Alla Portugesa*, *Alla Moscovita* etc. 'The proposal was ridiculous', commented the noted English music historian Sir John Hawkins, in his *General History of Music* of 1776. He continued, 'for in music, composed according to the principles generally known and received, there can be no such discrimination of style as will enable the hearer to distinguish the music of one country, much less one city, from another'. If the idea of distinguishable national styles in music does not appear so far fetched today, we may still be inclined to agree with Hawkins that regional styles are less easy to isolate. One cannot doubt that Corbett witness at first hand Italian instrumental music in all its splendid diversity, but to what extent there was, for instance, a particular style of concerto writing peculiar to Turin or Padua, or Ireland and Russia, and how far his own works reflect this, remains to be proofed. Whether or not Corbett's English contemporaries were able to recognise such stylistic subtleties, or whether they were just attracted by the kaleidoscopic variety of styles and the memorable, clear-cut melodies, we can only guess. What is clear, is that these concertos display the workings of an observant and imaginative musician, who succeeds very well both in the prime aim of all concerto composers, to provide genteel entertainment, and also in the particular aim of English concerto writers, which was to produce technically modest but interesting music for the amateur performers who were the mainstay of the musical societies which constituted the backbone of provincial musical life in Georgian England.

Despite their titles, the thirty-five concertos share many common features. Strongly reflecting English taste, they are, on the whole, closer in style to Corelli's popular *concerti grossi Op. 6* (1712) than they are to the solo concertos of composers such as Vivaldi. That is

to say that although they often adopt the Vivaldian (Venetian) three-movement plan, with two fast-paced movements framing a slower middle one, the individual movements themselves display the unmistakable influence of the *sonata da camera* (seen in the last four works of Corelli's Op. 6), in which dance forms and metres prevail. The majority of Corbett's fast movements are in binary form, like Corelli's Op.6 nos. 9-12, and although the sequential melodic writing of the opening sections of concertos such as *Alla Genouse* and *Alla Paduana* suggests a passing familiarity with the fashionable *ritornello concerto* pioneered by Torelli and Vivaldi, the influence never extends to the overall structural organisation of movements. Despite his residence in Italy and all his foreign 'Gustos', perhaps the most appealing feature of Corbett's concertos is their essentially simple English melodic style, distinguished by memorable, shortwinded, clear-cut phrase patterns, which are as pleasing and fresh today as they were in Corbett's own time.

Simon Heighes (1990)  
The Queen's College Oxford



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*European Community Baroque Orchestra*

***Bizzarie Universali*** William Corbett (c. 1675 - 1748)

Roy Goodman *conductor and violin* Andrew Manze *violin*

**DDD**

<b>Alla Milanese</b>		<b>16 allegro</b>	<b>1.14</b>
1 allegro	3.04	<b>Alla Siciliana</b>	
2 largo	0.41	17 allegro	2.51
3 allegro assai	2.41	18 andante	3.14
<b>Alla Genouese</b>		19 allegro	2.06
4 allegro	3.26	<b>Alla Paduana</b>	
5 largo	0.35	20 allegro assai	2.09
6 allegro	1.59	21 largo	0.32
<b>Alla Todesca</b>		22 allegro assai	2.38
7 largo andante	4.24	<b>Alla Turinese</b>	
8 allegro spiritoso	2.05	23 largo	2.18
9 minuet	1.35	24 allegro spiritoso	2.05
<b>Alla Spagniola</b>		25 aria allegro ma non presto	1.43
10 andante puntato	1.36	<b>All' Irlandese</b>	
11 gavot allegro	0.53	26 largo cantabile	3.43
12 largo e staccato	0.29	27 allegro	1.22
13 allegro tempo di minueto	2.10	28 allegro spiritoso	2.18
<b>Alla Romana</b>			
14 largo	2.19	<b>total time</b>	<b>60.59</b>
15 allegro	3.33		