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PETER WHELAN  
TARA ERRAUGHT  
IRISH, BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

# The Trials of Tenducci

*A Castrato in Ireland*



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# **The Trials of Tenducci**

*A Castrato in Ireland*

PETER WHELAN

TARA ERRAUGHT

IRISH BAROQUE ORCHESTRA



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# The Trials of Tenducci

## *A Castrato in Ireland*

65:57

MENU

PETER WHELAN  
*artistic director*

TARA ERRAUGHT  
*mezzo-soprano*

IRISH BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

PIERRE VAN MALDERE (1729–1768)

### **Symphony in G major, VR28** <sup>□</sup>

- 1 — Allegro assai 3:31
- 2 — Andantino 3:38
- 3 — Presto 1:54

THOMAS ARNE (1710–1778)

- 4 — **Amid a thousand racking woes** (Act 1 Scene 2 of *Artaxerxes*) 4:46
- 5 — **Water parted from the sea** (Act 3 Scene 1 of *Artaxerxes*) 3:09

TOMMASO GIORDANI (c. 1730–1806)

### **The Celebrated Overture and Irish Medley to *The Island of Saints*** <sup>□</sup>

- 6 — Allegro spiritoso 2:32
- 7 — Shepherds I have lost my love 2:05
- 8 — The Irish Medley 3:46
  
- 9 — **Caro mio ben** 3:07
  
- 10 — **Queen Mary's Lamentation** 4:10

JOHANN CHRISTIAN FISCHER (1733–1800)

**Oboe Concerto No. 7 in F major**

- 11 — Andante: Gramachree Molly with Variations 4:43  
ANDREAS HELM oboe

JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH (1735–1782)

- 12 — **Ebben si vada – Io ti lascio** 6:14

ANONYMOUS, *arr.* JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH

- 13 — **The Braes of Ballenden**<sup>□</sup> 8:25

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

**Exsultate, jubilate, K. 165**

- 14 — Exsultate, jubilate 4:28  
15 — Fulget amica dies 0:40  
16 — Tu virginum corona 6:12  
17 — Alleluia 2:31

*score editions*

van Maldere: Brian Clark (Prima la musica!)

Arne, Giordani, Fischer and Bach: Huw Daniel

<sup>□</sup> world premiere recordings



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# The Trials of Tenducci

At Ranelagh, fine rolls and butter see:  
*Signor Tenducci*, and the best green tea!  
Italian singing is as light as feather;  
*Beard* is too loud, too powerful for this weather!

David Garrick, Epilogue to  
Arthur Murphy's *All in the Wrong* (1761)

By the summer of 1761, when the English actress Mary Ann Yates delivered these lines at London's Drury Lane Theatre, the soprano castrato Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci (c. 1735–90) had become a star attraction at the city's popular Ranelagh Pleasure Gardens. Garrick chose to contrast the forceful vocal production of English tenor John Beard with Tenducci's 'light' voice. Similar qualities were also highlighted in Tobias Smollett's novel *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), when Lydia Melford reports having heard at Ranelagh:

the famous Tenducci, a thing from Italy; it looks for all the world like a man, though they say it is not. The voice to be sure is neither man's nor woman's, but it is more melodious than either, and it warbled so divinely, that while I listened, I really thought myself in Paradise.

Born in Siena, Tenducci's singing career was probably launched in Sardinia at the 1750 wedding festivities of Spanish Infanta Maria Antonia and Vittorio Amadeo, Duke of Savoy. A succession of minor operatic roles followed and Tenducci was subsequently invited to London, where he performed as *secondo uomo* for the King's Theatre's 1758–59 season. During this time he also achieved wide notoriety thanks to a scandal involving Elizabeth Lyttelton, one of Tenducci's many aristocratic admirers, and further personal trials were soon to come.

On 1 January 1760, one Francesco Giuliani filed a lawsuit claiming that Tenducci owed him a significant sum of money for board and provisions provided earlier in Italy. By June Tenducci had been committed to debtors' prison in Southwark, where he remained until February 1761 – with the exception of a brief period as a fugitive. A reward of 20 guineas was offered for his recapture, with the *London Evening Post* describing the prisoner as speaking 'very little English, and that very bad' and being 'about six Feet high or upwards, very thin, and ill made' (4 September 1760).

The major breakthrough of Tenducci's career was undoubtedly his role in Thomas Arne's English-language opera *Artaxerxes*, which premiered at London's Drury Lane Theatre in 1762. A translation and adaptation of Metastasio's immensely popular libretto, *Artaserse*, Tenducci sang the part of the hero Arbaces. Clear evidence of his virtuoso vocal powers is provided by the aria 'Amid a thousand racking woes' (Act 1 Scene 2), but it was to be the simple lament 'Water parted from the sea' (Act 3 Scene 1) that brought the castrato widespread and long-lasting fame with Dublin street urchins reportedly singing a parody that included 'and all the tunes that he could play, was "Water parted from the Say"'.

Tenducci appeared again as Arbaces in the first Dublin production of *Artaxerxes*, which lasted for a record run of thirty-three performances (July 1765–May 1766). By this time, Dublin’s well-established public music scene had tempted many visiting performers, including George Frideric Handel. Another foreigner to seize this opportunity was the violinist Pierre (Peter) van Maldere (1729–68), who arrived from the Brussels court of Prince Charles Alexander of Lorraine in 1751. A leading figure in a concert series held at Fishamble Street’s Philharmonic Room, Maldere remained in the Irish capital until March 1753. His Symphony in G major, VR28, comes from an undated set published in Paris, but may have been composed in Dublin.

True to his earlier form, Tenducci’s sojourn in Ireland turned out to be rather more dramatic than Maldere’s. During the Dublin theatrical season, Tenducci had given singing lessons to fifteen-year old Dorothea Maunsell, daughter of a prosperous barrister. By August 1766, the pair had been secretly married by a Catholic priest and fled to Cork, where they were apprehended. Tenducci was imprisoned and subsequently stood trial in Cork, but by the middle of 1767 Dorothea’s father had relented and given permission for the couple to re-marry, this time in a Protestant church. Dorothea’s own account of these events was published as *The True and Genuine Narrative of Mr. and Mrs. Tenducci: In a Letter to a Friend at Bath* (1768). Their union did not last: in March 1776, a notice in the *London Gazetteer* announced that a judge had ‘declared the marriage void from the beginning’.

Shortly after their (second) wedding, the Tenduccis left for Edinburgh, where they were to perform as guests of the local Musical Society. During this period (1768–69), Tenducci appeared as Arbaces in Scotland’s premiere of *Artaxerxes*, with his wife taking the lead female role. A special feature of the production was the inclusion of three Scotch folk songs with lyrics by Robert Fergusson: *By Heav’ns Displeasure* (tune: *The Braes of Ballenden*), *Where Shall I Wander?* (*Lochaber*) and *What Doubts Oppress* (*Roslin Castle*). Tenducci sang the first two of these, and although these arrangements are no longer extant, his stirring renditions made a strong impression on many in the audience. *The Braes of Ballenden* appears to have been a particular favourite of Tenducci’s; in fact, it is likely that the singer suggested that his friend Johann Christian Bach prepare an arrangement of the tune. The text chosen was Thomas Blacklock’s ‘Beneath a green shade, a lovely young swain’ and the resulting work received its first public performance in London’s Festino Rooms (Hanover Square) in 1779.

It was presumably also Tenducci who requested that Bach arrange an aria from Michele Mortellari’s *Arsace*, an opera that had premiered with Tenducci in the title role in Padua in 1775. For the resulting *scena*, *Ebben si vada – Io ti lascio*, Bach added obbligato parts for oboe and fortepiano to the voice and strings. An undated version of this work was published in Paris with a dedication from Tenducci to Louis, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Noailles, under the title ‘*Rondeau* sung at the Grand Concert in London by *Monsieur* Tenducci in 1778 accompanied on the fortepiano by *Monsieur* J. Christian Bach and on the oboe by *Monsieur* Fischer’. The last-named musician, Johann Christian Fischer, had settled in London in 1768 and eventually became a member of Queen Charlotte’s band of musicians. Fischer was also highly sought after as a soloist at public

concerts, often performing his own music. The final movement of Fischer's Seventh Oboe Concerto comprises a popular set of variations on the Irish folk song *Gramachree Molly*.

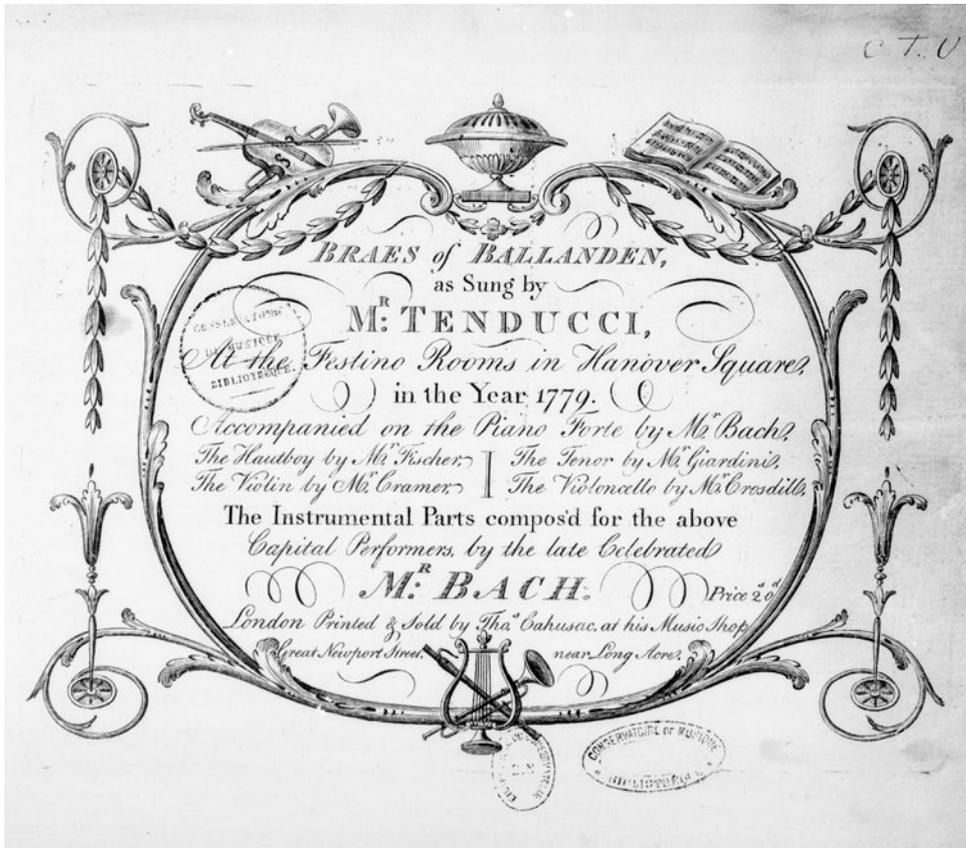
Two further works associated with Tenducci were the 'favourite' songs, *Caro mio ben* and *Queen Mary's Lamentation*. Both had appeared in print by 1783 ('as sung by Signor Tenducci') after their composer, Tommaso Giordani (c. 1730–1806), sold them to London-based publisher John Preston for £30 in 1782, together with music from his comic opera, *Il bacio*. Tenducci had performed both pieces at Carl Friedrich Abel's concert series, presumably sometime after the death of the latter's business partner Johann Christian Bach on 1 January 1782. As with Arne's 'Water parted from the sea', the *Lamentation* expresses a desperate longing for freedom, in this case that of the imprisoned Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. A copy of this highly popular work existed in Jane Austen's hand.

Tenducci had met Giordani in Dublin during the 1760s, when the latter was composing and arranging operas for the Smock Alley and Crow Street Theatres. Having left Ireland in 1769, Giordani returned in 1783; he was to remain there until his death. A further well-known work by Giordani was his overture to James Messink's 1785 pantomime, *The Island of Saints, or The Institution of the Shamrock*. Described by a contemporary reviewer as 'chiefly composed of Irish tunes', the overture concludes with an 'Irish Medley' featuring the *Rakes of Westmeath*, *Rakes of Kilkenny*, *Miners of Wicklow*, *Lacrum Cush*, *Bucks of Westmeath*, *Rocks of Cashel* and *Rakes of Mallow*.

In August 1778, Tenducci travelled to France with Johann Christian Bach, in order to hear singers for the latter's upcoming opera *Amadis de Gaule*. While in Paris the pair were reunited with Mozart, who wrote to his father, 'Tenducci is here ... He is Bach's bosom friend. He also was greatly delighted to see me again ... I am composing a scena for Tenducci, which is to be performed on Sunday; it is for pianoforte, oboe, horn and bassoon' (27 August 1778). Unfortunately, this work is now lost, but Mozart's sacred motet *Exsultate, jubilate*, K. 165, provides some idea of a work he composed for a similarly gifted castrato around this time. It was first performed at Milan's Theatine Church in January 1773 by Venanzio Rauzzini.

In February 1783, Tenducci returned to Dublin, where he reportedly intended to settle and 'teach the Art of Singing' (*Freeman's Journal*). By December 1784 – now in the very twilight of what had been a lengthy and highly successful (although at times somewhat erratic) career – Tenducci was back in London, where he published a treatise of singing, *Instruction of Mr. Tenducci to his Scholars* (1785). In doing so, he ensured that his knowledge and experience could be passed on to successive generations of vocalists.

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Fischer, the great oboe player, whose Minuet was all the rage, was a man of singular disposition, and great professional pride. Being very much pressed by a nobleman to sup with him after the opera, he declined the invitation, saying, that he was usually very much fatigued, and made it a rule never to go out after the evening's performance. The noble lord, would, however, take no denial, and assured Fischer he did not ask him professionally, but merely for the gratification of his society and conversation. Thus urged and encouraged, he went: he had not, however, been many minutes in the house of the consistent nobleman, before his lordship approached him, and said: 'I hope, Mr. Fischer, you have brought your oboe in your pocket'. 'No, my Lord', said Fischer, 'My oboe never sups'. He turned on his heel, and instantly left the house, and no persuasion could ever induce him to return to it.

– from *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly*

Amid a thousand racking woes,  
I pant, I tremble, and I feel,

Cold blood from ev'ry vein distill,  
And clog my lab'ring heart.

5 — WATER PARTED FROM THE SEA

Water parted from the sea,  
May increase the river's tide;  
To the bubbling fount may flee,  
Or thro' fertile valleys glide:

Tho' in search of lost repose,  
Thro' the land 'tis free to roam,  
Still it murmurs as it flows,  
Panting for its native home.

9 — CARO MIO BEN

Caro mio ben,  
Credimi almen,  
Senza di te  
Languisce il cor.

*My dear beloved,  
believe me at least,  
without you  
my heart languishes.*

Il tuo fedel  
Sospira ognor.  
Cessa, crudel,  
Tanto rigor!

*Your faithful one  
always sighs.  
Cease, cruel one,  
so much punishment!*

I sigh and lament me in vain,  
 These walls can but echo my moan,  
 Alas! it increases my pain  
 When I think on the days that are gone.

Through the grate of my prison, I see  
 The birds as they wanton in air  
 My heart how it pants to be free,  
 My looks they are wild with despair.

Above, tho' opprest by my fate;  
 I burn with contempt for my foes,  
 Tho' fortune has alter'd my state,  
 She ne'er can subdue me to those.

12 — EBBEN SI VADA – IO TI LASCIO*RECITATIVE*

Ebben si vada,  
 trionfi la ragione. Itene a terra,  
 vergognosi trofei,  
 vili spoglie d'amor. Impallidisca,  
 tremi l'Asia al mio brando,  
 e si cangino alfin per mio decoro  
 le rose e i mirti in glorioso alloro.

False woman, in ages to come,  
 Thy malice detested shall be,  
 And when we are cold in the tomb,  
 Some heart still will sorrow for me.

Ye roofs! where cold damps and dismay,  
 With silence and solitude dwell,  
 How comfortless passes the day,  
 How sad tolls the evening bell.

The owls from the battlements cry,  
 Hollow winds seem to murmur around,  
 'O Mary, prepare thee to die',  
 my blood it runs cold at the sound.

*RECITATIVE*

*Right, let us be gone,  
 let reason triumph. Out of my sight,  
 you shameful trophies,  
 vile spoils of love! Grow pale,  
 tremble, Asia, before my sword,  
 and may the roses and myrtles be transformed  
 into glorious laurels in my honour.*

Ma reo sarà Rinaldo  
di sì enorme viltà? Lasciarla, oh dio!  
Lasciarla in questo stato – ah ch'io mi perdo!  
Volgimi o cara al meno  
pria ch'io parta da te, pria che m'uccida  
il barbaro dolore,  
un sguardo di pietà, se non d'amore.

*ARIA*

Io ti lascio, e questo addio  
se sia l'ultimo, non so.  
A chi sa bell'idol mio  
se mai più ti rivedro.

Vengo, vengo o ciel!  
Deh'lascia o pene!  
Per te sol mio ben pavento.  
Vengo o ciel che pena!  
Il più barbaro tormento  
giusti dei chi mai provo.

*But will Rinaldo be guilty of such  
enormous crimes? How can I leave her, O God,  
leave her, in this state? Ah, how I am lost!  
Turn to me, at least, O dearest,  
before I leave you, before this cruel pain  
kills me,  
with a look of pity, if not of love.*

*I leave you, and I do not know  
if this farewell will be the last.  
Ah, who knows, my idol,  
if I will ever see you again?*

*I come, I come, O heaven!  
Ah let go of me, how I suffer!  
For you alone, my dear, I am afraid.  
I come, O heaven, what sorrow!  
Just gods, who ever felt  
such cruel torment?*

*Translation: James Chater, 2020*

Beneath a green shade, a lovely young swain  
 One ev'ning reclin'd, to discover his pain.  
 So sad, yet so sweetly, he warbled his woe,  
 The winds ceas'd to breathe, and the fountains to flow;  
 Rude winds with compassion could hear him complain;  
 Yet Chloe, less gentle, was deaf to his strain.

How happy, he cried, my moments once flew,  
 Ere Chloe's bright charms first flash'd in my view!  
 Those eyes then with pleasure the dawn could survey,  
 Nor smil'd the fair morning more cheerful than they;  
 Now scenes of distress please only my sight;  
 I'm tortur'd in pleasure, and languish in light.

14 — EXSULTATE, JUBILATE

Exsultate, jubilate,  
 o vos animae beatae!  
 Dulcia cantica canendo,  
 cantui vestro respondendo,  
 psallant aethera cum me.

Through changes in vain relief I pursue,  
 All, all but conspire my griefs to renew;  
 From sunshine to zephyrs and shades we repair –  
 To sunshine we fly from too piercing an air;  
 But love's ardent fire burns always the same,  
 No winter can cool it, no summer inflame.

But see the pale moon all clouded retires;  
 The breezes grow cool, not Strephon's desires:  
 I fly from the dangers of tempest and wind,  
 Yet nourish the madness that preys on my mind:  
 Ah, wretch! how can life be worthy thy care?  
 To lengthen its moments, but lengthens despair.

*Rejoice, resound with joy,  
 O you blessed souls!  
 While singing sweet songs,  
 responding to your song,  
 let the heavens sing with me.*

Fulget amica dies,  
iam fugere et nubila et procellae;  
exortus est justis inexpectata quies.  
Undique obscura regnabat nox;  
surgite tandem laeti,  
qui timuistis adhuc,  
et iucundi aurorae fortunatae  
frondes dextera plena et lilia date.

*The friendly day shines,  
both clouds and storms have fled now;  
there has arisen for the righteous an unexpected calm.  
Dark night reigned everywhere;  
arise, happy at last,  
you who feared till now,  
and joyful for this lucky dawn,  
give garlands and lilies with full right hand.*

16 — TU VIRGINUM CORONA

Tu virginum corona,  
tu nobis pacem dona.  
Tu consolare affectus,  
unde suspirat cor.

*You, crown of virgins,  
grant us peace.  
Console our feelings,  
from which our hearts sigh.*

17 — ALLELUIA

Alleluia.

*Alleluia.*

# Peter Whelan

## *conductor & fortepiano*

Peter Whelan is among the most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance of his generation, with a remarkable career as a conductor, keyboardist and solo bassoonist. He is Artistic Director of the Irish Baroque Orchestra and founding Artistic Director of Ensemble Marsyas. Recent engagements have included appearances with the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, The English Concert, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra and Beethoven Orchester Bonn.

As conductor, Whelan has a particular passion for exploring and championing neglected music from the Baroque era. Recent projects funded by The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon and Creative Scotland involved recreating and staging live performances of choral and symphonic music from eighteenth-century Dublin and Edinburgh. This led to his award-winning album *Edinburgh 1742* for Linn and his 2017 reconstruction of the 'Irish State Musick' in its original venue of Dublin Castle.

Whelan's performances with the Irish Baroque Orchestra have included Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, Purcell's *Hail! bright Cecilia* and Handel's *Messiah*. With Irish National Opera and Irish Chamber Orchestra he has performed Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and Vivaldi's *Bajazet*

in a co-production with Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. He has made his conducting debut with Scottish Chamber Orchestra in a programme of Mozart with mezzo-soprano Katie Bray.

Whelan's conducting has been widely praised for its 'rich insight, style and charisma' (*The Guardian*), its 'stylish verve' (*BBC Music Magazine*), its 'exuberance and elegance' (*Irish Examiner*) and its 'slick tempi, grit and character' (*GoldenPlec*).



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# Tara Erraught

*mezzo-soprano*

A rich, radiant voice, expansive range and dynamic stage presence are Tara Erraught's hallmarks. Her extensive repertoire includes Mozart, Rossini, Strauss, Bellini, Dvořák, Gounod and Handel as well as contemporary composers.

Opera highlights include Niklausse (*Les contes d'Hoffmann*) and Hänsel at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Stéphano (*Roméo et Juliette*) at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Angelina (*La Cenerentola*) at the Munich Opera Festival and Annio (*La clemenza di Tito*) together with Joyce DiDonato and Rolando Villazón and conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden.

Erraught made 47 role debuts with the Bayerische Staatsoper, including Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Hänsel, Despina (*Così fan tutte*), Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*) and Komponist (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). She made her triumphant US debut at Washington National Opera as Angelina (*La Cenerentola*), and made her role debut as Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) at Glyndebourne Festival and the BBC Proms. Aside from Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) she sang in the new production of *La Cenerentola* at the Wiener Staatsoper, earning accolades from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as the 'New Queen of Belcanto'.

Past recital and orchestral performances include engagements at the Schubertiade with Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks under Herbert Blomstedt, with the Minnesota Orchestra conducted by Simone Young, and at Wigmore Hall in London. She has also performed in New York's Carnegie Hall and The Kennedy Center in Washington.



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# Irish Baroque Orchestra

The Irish Baroque Orchestra (IBO) is acclaimed as Ireland's flagship period music ensemble and delivers historically-informed performances to the highest standards at home and abroad. Under the artistic direction of Peter Whelan, the orchestra explores the playing techniques and performance styles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and performs only on period instruments or modern replicas.

The IBO's championing of previously-unknown high-quality gems from eighteenth-century Ireland reveals music of exceptional quality. This artistic rehabilitation prompts deeper reflections on our social, political and cultural history. Now internationally regarded, IBO is changing the way that we listen to music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Ireland. Even Handel's *Messiah* – an annual touring highlight in the IBO calendar – is a rekindled link to Dublin's cultural life in 1742.

In 2019 the orchestra released *Welcome Home, Mr Dubourg* on Linn, as the first in a series of five releases with Peter Whelan at the helm seeking to tell the rich stories of Ireland's Baroque era. The album has been profiled in *The Irish Times* and on BBC Radio 3 and has met with positive reviews across Europe. The IBO's 2019 production of Vivaldi's *Griselda* with Irish National Opera, directed by Tom Creed, was shortlisted for the Best Opera category in the 2020 Irish Times Theatre Awards.

IBO is generously funded by The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon. It also receives financial support from Dublin City Council and is resident at the National Concert Hall, Dublin.



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# Irish Baroque Orchestra

direction/fortepiano

Peter Whelan

double bass

Malachy Robinson

first violin

Claire Duff

Marja Gaynor

George Clifford

oboe

Andreas Helm

Ana Inés Feola

second violin

James Toll

Anita Vedres

Leonie Curtin

bassoon

Joe Qiu

viola

Jordan Bowron

Lisa Dowdall

horn

Jeroen Billiet

Gilbert Camí Farras

cello

Sarah McMahan

Aoife Nic Athlaoich

The Paul Poletti fortepiano  
was kindly loaned by  
Queen's University Belfast.

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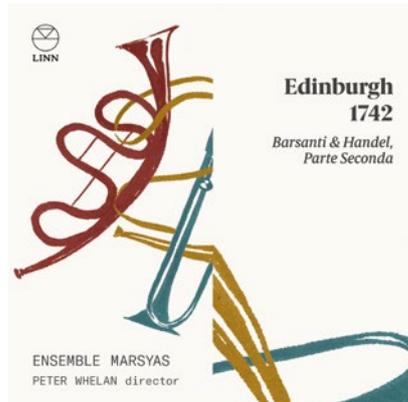




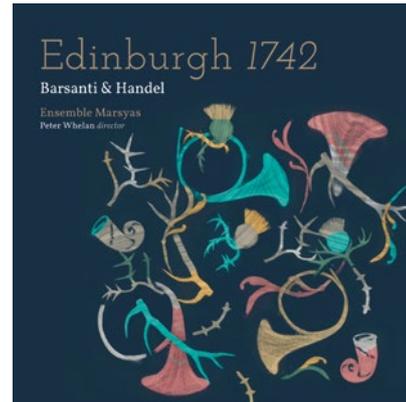
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