

About Lost in Venice

Tempest presents a program called *Lost In Venice*, which we hope you find intriguing. Why would one want to get lost in Venice? And how might one plan to do it?

Musical rhetoric is vital to bringing music of the Baroque to life. Gesture, timing, character, articulation, and spontaneity are all devices used to fill individual musical “words” with emotional expressiveness. Musical rhetoric is most powerful (and also most risky) at moments of transition within an individual work. In the case of this program, *Lost In Venice*, the music changes course in this way from one work to the next, rather than at transitional moments within a single piece of music.

Thus, Tempest’s strategy for discovering more about Baroque-period Venice has been to meld together an entire program of music without stopping, along the way visiting the musical neighbourhoods of a wide range of Venetian composers. They include Monteverdi, Castello, Merula, Marini, Legrenzi, Albinoni, and of course Vivaldi’s beloved Four Seasons.

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

- Born in Cremona, Italy
- An inventive and renowned composer, singer, viola da gambist, and conductor
- Also a Roman Catholic priest
- Monteverdi composed madrigals, operas, and church music and his work signals the change from Renaissance to Baroque music
- He wrote one of the earliest operas, *l’Orfeo*, which is still performed today

Dario Castello (ca. 1590 - ca.1658)

- No definitive biographical information available, although it is known that he lived and worked in Venice, and that he was influenced by Monteverdi, with whom he probably worked
- It has been speculated that he might have died in the plague of 1630, as no new music by him was published after that date
- An early Baroque composer and instrumentalist
- His music is considered particularly inventive and technically challenging, and his manuscripts are unusual for the period in that they specify the instruments to be used (sackbuts, violins, cornetti, and dulcians)
- Only 29 of Castello’s compositions survive

Tarquinio Merula (1595-1665)

- Born in Busseto, Italy
- An early Baroque composer, organist, and violinist, who worked in Cremona, Venice, Busseto, Bergamo, and Warsaw
- He was also strongly influenced by Monteverdi, but was also innovative, for example in writing motets for solo voice accompanied by strings
- His compositions for the violin anticipated the highly developed writing of the late Baroque period

Biagio Marini (1594-1663)

- Born in Brescia, Italy
- A virtuoso violinist and composer, who wrote music for violin, cornetto, bassoon, and trombone
- Like Castello, he joined Monteverdi's group of musicians at St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice
- He also worked in Brussels, Dusseldorf, and Neuberg au der Donau, and was influential throughout Europe
- He introduced the use of slurs, double- and triple-stopping, and tremolo effects to string writing
- Only 11 of his compositions survive

Giovanni Legrenzi (1626-1690)

- Born in Clusone, Italy, near Bergamo in the Republic of Venice
- Like Monteverdi, an ordained priest, as well as a composer of considerable liturgical music
- He also composed 17 widely popular operas, and was well known for his instrumental compositions
- Legrenzi was very influential in the development of late Baroque music throughout Northern Italy

Tomaso Albinoni (1671-1751)

- Born in Venice, Italy
- Relatively little is known about his life, although he is said to have been independently wealthy, so he did not need to seek employment through the church or by cultivating connections to the nobility
- He was a relatively prolific composer, having published 99 sonatas, 59 concertos, and 9 sinfonias
- Most of his operatic works have been lost, not having been published during his lifetime
- He had some influence on Johann Sebastian Bach

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

- Born in Venice, Italy
- Like Monteverdi and Legrenzi, he was ordained as a priest
- His music is often characterized as playful and exuberant
- He taught at one of the four most famous conservatories in Venice, and also worked at an opera house for a time
- He had a significant influence on J.S. Bach
- Vivaldi was generally recognized as one of the greatest Italian Baroque composers, especially for his sacred choral works, operas (more than 40), and concertos
- Each of the *Four Seasons* concertos was paired with a sonnet that also illustrated a particular season, and the music contained in the concertos evokes flowing creeks, chirping birds, buzzing insects, loud storms, silent nights, crackling fires, dancing, and ice-skating parties