

Tuesday, March 31, 2015, 8pm
Thursday, April 2, 2015, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Cecilia Bartoli, *mezzo-soprano*
Sergio Ciomei, *piano*

PROGRAM

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| Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757) | Andante, from Sonata in E major, K. 380 (1781) |
| Nicolò Porpora (1686–1768) | “Come nave in mezzo all’onde,” aria of Siface, from <i>Siface</i> (1725) |
| Riccardo Broschi (ca. 1698–1756) | “Chi non sente al mio dolore,” aria of Epitide, from <i>Merope</i> (1732) |
| George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) | Passacaglia, from Keyboard Suite in G minor, HWV 432 (1720) |
| Handel | Sarabande, from Keyboard Suite in D minor, HWV 437 (1733) |
| Handel | “Lascia la spina,” aria of Piacere, from <i>Il Trionfo del tempo e del disinganno</i> , HWV 46a (1758) |
| Hermann Raupach (1728–1778) | “O placido il mare,” aria of Laodice, from <i>Siroe, re di Persia</i> (1760) |
| Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) | Fantasy No. 3 in D minor, K. 397/385g (1782) |
| Mozart | “Parto, parto,” aria of Sesto, from <i>La clemenza di Tito</i> , K. 621 (1791) [March 31 only] |
| Mozart | “Exsultate jubilate,” solo motet, K. 165 (1773) [April 2 only] |

INTERMISSION

PROGRAM

- Johann Adolf Hasse (1699–1783) “Se mai senti spirarti sul volto,” aria of Sesto, from *La clemenza di Tito* (1738)
- Hasse “Vò disperato a morte,” aria of Sesto, from *La clemenza di Tito* (1738)
- Leonardo Leo (1694–1744) Allegretto in G minor
- Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739) Allegro in G major
- Antonio Caldara (ca. 1670–1736) “Quel buon pastor son io,” aria of Abel, from the “componimento sacro” *La morte d’Abel figura di quella del nostro Redentore* (1732)
- Scarlatti Vivo, from Sonata in B major, K. 262
- Leonardo Vinci (1696–1730) “Quanto invidio la sorte...Chi vive amante,” recitative and aria of Erissena, from *Alessandro nelle Indie* (1730)
- Porpora “Nobil onda,” aria of Adelaide, from *Adelaide* (1723)

Cecilia Bartoli’s 2015 West Coast tour is sponsored by James D. Rigler and the Rigler-Deutsch Foundation, in association with U-Live/Universal Music Arts and Entertainment, London: u-live.com.



*Hamburg Steinway piano provided by Steinway & Sons, San Francisco.
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MUTILATED BEAUTY
THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY
OF THE CASTRATO

“Due to their superhuman physical nature, their unusually thorough training, and their immense talent, you might say that what these singers sang was probably some of the best music written at the time. Since it stretches the limits of your own abilities it is also a great personal challenge for a modern interpreter—especially a woman.”—*Cecilia Bartoli*

“Must we mutilate men in order to give them a perfection they did not possess at birth?”—*Sarah Goudar*

SARAH GOUDAR, an Irish-born beauty whose striking looks had promoted her from career as a chambermaid and tapstress, first encountered castrati in the 1770s, in Naples, where she and her French adventurer husband Ange were busy fleecing the local nobility. Naples was perhaps the center of traffic in castrato singers. But even Madame Goudar felt compelled to acknowledge the beauty of these sopranists, with their astonishing vocal range from contralto to high soprano.

The French were always disapproving: for them it was unnatural. But thanks to Handel the English were utterly bewitched. So when the indefatigable Dr. Burney visited Italy, he was determined to discover where the deed was done. “I made enquiries in order to know to which town one could attribute especially the operation of castration for singing, but I could not obtain precise and satisfactory replies. In Milan they told me: in Venice; in Venice they referred me to Bologna; in Bologna they denied the fact and blamed Florence. Florence attributed it to Rome and Rome to Naples... The Italians are so ashamed of this practice that each province blames another for it.”

The shame to which Dr. Burney alludes was, one suspects, only skin deep. Castrating young boys between the ages of eight and twelve was big business, and if the boy developed into a Farinelli, a Senesino or a Caffarelli

the potential rewards were huge. As Cecilia Bartoli has discovered from her own research, “Probably my deepest impression and saddest recognition is the scale of this phenomenon. In the 18th century literally thousands of boys were castrated every year...but only very few of them actually became famous—the others died, became outcasts, beggars or prostitutes.”

It was, of course, illegal and officially frowned upon by the Church, but Italians from the Holy Father down to the humblest of small-town barber-surgeons were masters when it came to turning a blind eye. Indeed, it was a Pope—Clement VIII—who at the beginning of the 17th century was so besotted by castrati that he authorized castration solely *ad honorem Dei* in order that their voices might number among the choristers who sang for him in the Sistine Chapel. And it was another Pope, Innocent XI, who effectively helped castrati up onto the stage when he issued an edict banning women from appearing as actresses in the theater within the Papal States. So began the tradition of cross-dressing, with young castrati taking leading female roles in opera houses over which the Vatican presided.

The Kingdom of Naples was, though, beyond the secular Papal writ. So how is it that historians continue to view that city as the center of the Italian castrati tradition? One reason lies in the fact that Naples was operamad. In 1737, the Real Teatro di San Carlo opened its doors for the very first time; it was at that time the largest opera house in the world, seating 3,300 people and named for the Bourbon King, Charles VII. To be operamad in 18th-century Naples—and just about everywhere else in Europe too—meant to be mad about singers. And no singers caught the spirit of the age more exactly than the castrati. They catered to the late-Baroque love of artifice and decorative detail with a voice that owed its origins to an unnatural act and that was capable of singing the most ornately decorated musical lines so far heard in the history of Western music. As one correspondent reported, “They sing like nightingales, they

make you lose your balance and take your breath away?”

Cecilia Bartoli cites other reasons why the history of Naples should have been so entwined with that of the castrati. “For centuries, the south of Italy had been extremely poor, and parents hoped that at least one of their many children might thus come to fame and fortune. Naples was already a huge city, with four conservatories, which had originally been founded as orphanages. The orphans would go out and raise money for their home by begging or singing so in the end it was decided to give them a musical education in order to improve their performances. So this was a city where poor boys were educated to become artists and musicians.”

Education...education...and musical education. That was what charitable Naples offered boys from poor families who had been persuaded to sacrifice their sons’ masculinity. And no Neapolitan teacher was as admired and successful as Nicolò Porpora, a composer too. Working at two of the Neapolitan conservatories in the first two decades of the 18th century—the Conservatorio di Sant’Onofrio and Santa Maria di Loreto—Porpora taught three of the greatest castrati of the age: Farinelli, Caffarelli, and Salimbeni.

Porpora had strong views on how singing should be taught. A single sheet of his simple vocal exercises is said to have been all that Caffarelli needed for daily practice through most of his professional life. Porpora is supposed to have insisted that his young pupils at the conservatories sang from this single sheet of exercises every day for six years because they contained every possible difficulty the singer might encounter in the art of proper vocalizing.

The soprano was assisted by the physical changes to his body that came as a result of castration. There is evidence that the castrati were taller than average and certainly their rib cages developed into a rounder shape, creating a unique sounding-box. And the larynx did not descend as with other boys, so the vocal cords remained closer to the cavities of

resonance, all of which helped to reinforce both the clarity and the brilliance of the voice produced by vocal cords and throat muscles that had been toughened up by a relentless daily regime of vocal exercises.

What audiences most prized in castrati was their ability to move them emotionally. In London, in 1733, Farinelli appeared with Senesino in *Artaserse*. As Dr. Burney reports the evening, “Senesino had the part of a furious tyrant, and Farinelli that of an unfortunate hero in chains; but in the course of the first air, the captive so softened the heart of the tyrant, that Senesino, forgetting his stage-character, ran to Farinelli and embraced him....” And there wasn’t a dry eye in the house. There are reports, too, of maestros in the pit being unable to continue after a particularly affecting performance by a Farinelli, a Senesino, or a Caffarelli.

Nicolò Porpora wrote his opera *Adelaide* for Rome in 1723, and the 18-year-old Farinelli took the title-role at the first performance. “Nobil onda” is one of those storm arias so enjoyed by 18th-century audiences and composers, with the orchestra raising a mighty tempest at sea while the soloist echoes the unruly elements as he clings on for dear life.

Porpora’s great rival was Leonardo Vinci; both men had been educated in Naples at the Conservatorio dei Poveri di Gesù Cristo and competing theatres in Rome and Venice would stage new operas by both composers simultaneously. Vinci was prodigious in his output and died a suitably operatic death when it was rumored that he had been poisoned after an ill-advised love affair. Farinelli was evenhanded in his response to the music of both Porpora and Vinci. He created the part of Berenice—a skirts role—in Vinci’s *Alessandro nelle Indie* in Rome in 1730, though the role of Erissena, and therefore the recitative and aria “Quanto invidia la sorte...Chi vive amante,” were created by Appiani, another of Nicolò Porpora’s pupils.

The sacred banishes the profane in *La morte d’Abel*, a rare example of an oratorio written for Farinelli, to a text by his lifelong friend Metastasio, by Antonio Caldara. The

solemn aria “Quel buon pastor” is a reminder that the castrato was created to sing religious music. Caldara, who led the typical itinerant life of a Baroque composer working for patrons in Venice, Mantua, Barcelona, and Rome, never lost a feel for the traditions of Italian church music.

It may be that the composer who best knew the character of Farinelli’s voice was his brother, Riccardo Broschi, who wrote several roles that exploited Farinelli’s particular vocal talents, not least his ability to hold a note on a single breath for a whole minute while singing both loudly and softly. The role of Epitide in *Merope*, a heroic opera written in 1732 for Turin and containing the aria “Chi non sente al mio dolore,” was especially tailored for his brother’s remarkable talents.

It was perhaps Caffarelli, another of Nicolò Porpora’s pupils, who exhibited the most outrageous behavior among the 18th-century castrati. He was fêted in France, where the king provided him with a house at Versailles, a royal carriage and pair and servants in livery. But enough was never sufficient for Caffarelli. When he was leaving France, Louis XV sent the singer a gold snuffbox, but the castrato complained that he’d been given many that were more beautiful and precious and that this one didn’t even have a portrait of the monarch on its lid. It was pointed out to him that only ambassadors got snuffboxes with royal portraits. To which Caffarelli replied, “Only ambassadors! Well let him make them sing!”

Porpora composed some noteworthy arias for his former student. “Come nave” from *Siface*, written in 1725, is a good example, another storm aria with the see-sawing of rough waves in the singer’s part and the orchestra on a flood tide (no special effect delighted 18th-century Italian audiences as much as rolling waves and tempest-tossed ships!).

Giovanni Carestini, who was known as Cusanino (a nod to his patrons, the Cusani family of Milan), created the role of Sesto in Johann Adolf Hasse’s *Tito Vespasiano* in Pesaro in 1735 and reprised it when the opera was revived (and revised) as *La Clemenza di*

Tito in Dresden in 1738. Carestini was a great rival of Farinelli, known for his burnished contralto tones and expressive legato singing where Farinelli was hailed for his vocal fireworks, though Carestini could toss off *fioriture* when he needed to, as “Vò disperato a morte” makes clear.

Their rivalry had come to a head in London, where Carestini sang for Handel’s company beginning in 1733. Carestini sang not only in Handel’s Italian operas, but also in several of his English-language oratorios. It was actually in Rome, during his journeyman years, that Handel composed his first oratorio, *Il Trionfo del tempo e del disinganno*, in 1707. Nothing is known about the singers of the first performance, but certainly three of the four would have been castrati. The aria “Lascia la spina,” a ravishing triple-time largo sung by the allegorical figure of Pleasure, is one of Handel’s most famous, and was reused by the composer in his London opera *Rinaldo* (1711).

Handel and Porpora in London, Hasse in Dresden—Italian opera, and the castrati who performed it, spread across much of Europe in the 18th century. One of the last outposts was St. Petersburg, where a succession of Romanov rulers brought foreigners in to create an Italian opera company at court. Hermann Raupach, born in Germany, joined the St. Petersburg court orchestra in 1755; he composed his setting of Metastasio’s *Siroe, re di Persia* there in 1760. “O placido il mare” is another example of the maritime-inspired bravura aria with which the castrati thrilled their audiences, with its coloratura depiction of howling winds and roiling seas.

The glory days of the castrati in the opera houses of Europe lasted for a little under two centuries, although they sang in the Sistine Chapel choir until the very beginning of the last century. Mozart’s *La Clemenza di Tito* dates from the end of the 18th century, as the sun was setting on the era of the castrati. Composed in 1791 for the coronation of Leopold II as Holy Roman Emperor, the opera sets the same Metastasian text as Hasse’s work from six decades earlier. The soprano castrato

Domenico Bedini created the role of Sesto in Mozart's opera, and the aria "Parto, parto," with its declamatory opening and florid duetting between singer and basset horn (in its orchestral version), is a wonderful last gasp for the operatic castrati.

The instrumental works on tonight's program complement the vocal selection, with a range of styles from the Italian Baroque of the Venetian Benedetto Marcello and the Neapolitan Leonardo Leo to the turbulent and expressive Viennese classicism of Mozart's D minor Fantasia. Handel's Passaglia and Sarabande, from his popular keyboard suites (1720 and 1733), encapsulate his talent as a melodist, which served him so well as an opera composer. And Domenico Scarlatti, represented here by two of his sonatas, was an important transitional figure from Handel's Baroque to Mozart's classicism.

In the opera house, the Romantic age put paid to a style of singing and a kind of theater that was so deliciously unnatural, embodied by the castrati. Yet the sopranists had touched hearts and minds in a unique way. But at a high price, we may feel. What about all those Neapolitan boys who never made the big time? Cecilia Bartoli feels that there are still people in our own time who are prepared to pay that price. "The sad thing is to realize that, even today, people mutilate their bodies because some fashions dictate a false ideal of beauty. Most people do it to their own bodies—when they undergo plastic surgery or use botox, for instance—but think of fashion models who starve themselves, becoming cripples in order to please the industry, their agents and often their families too. We are not that far from the 18th century after all!"

*Adapted from a program note
by Christopher Cook (2008)*



Decca/Ulf Weber

FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES, mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli has indisputably been one of the leading artists in the field of classical music. Her new opera roles, concert programs, and recording projects—exclusively on Decca—are eagerly awaited all over the world. The enormous success of her solo releases such as *The Vivaldi Album*, *Italian Arias by Gluck*, *The Salieri Album*, *Opera proibita*, *Maria*, *Sacrificium*, and *Mission* is reflected both in extraordinary sales which have firmly established her as today's best-selling classical artist—more than ten million copies of audio and video releases occupying the international pop charts for well over 100 weeks and garnering numerous “gold” and “platinum” certifications—and in major awards: five Grammys, more than a dozen Echos, and a Bambi (Germany), two Classical Brit Awards (United Kingdom), and the Victoire de la Musique (France), as well as many other prestigious prizes.

Ms. Bartoli has brought classical music to millions of people all over the world. But beyond this fact, she is especially gratified that the popularity of her projects has kindled

discussions that always lead to comprehensive reevaluation and rediscovery—that of composers who have been passed over and of repertoire which has been forgotten.

Herbert von Karajan, Daniel Barenboim, and Nikolaus Harnoncourt were among the first conductors with whom Ms. Bartoli worked. They noticed her talent at a very early stage, when she had barely completed her vocal studies with her parents in her hometown of Rome. Since then, many further renowned conductors, pianists, and orchestras have been her regular partners. In recent years, her work has begun to focus on collaborations with the most significant period-instrument orchestras (Akademie für Alte Musik, Les Arts Florissants, I Barocchisti, Concentus Musicus Wien, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Il Giardino Armonico, Basle Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Matheus, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and the Zurich period orchestra La Scintilla). Projects with orchestras in which Ms. Bartoli assumes the overall artistic responsibility have also become increasingly important to her and

were crowned by programs jointly developed and performed with the Vienna Philharmonic.

Ms. Bartoli sings in the most important concert halls of Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia. Her stage appearances include prestigious opera houses and festivals such as the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in London, La Scala in Milan, the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, the Salzburg Festival, the Zurich Opera House, and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris.

In 2008, Ms. Bartoli devoted herself to the early 19th century—the age of Italian Romanticism and *bel canto*—and in particular to the legendary singer Maria Malibran, whose 200th birthday fell on March 24 of that year. To mark the bicentenary, the artist released a new album, *Maria* (Edison Award, Prix Caecilia), and the DVD *Maria* (The Barcelona Concert/Malibran Rediscovered). Rounding off this homage to Maria Malibran and the “Romantic Revolution” were the first complete recording of *La sonnambula* with period instruments and a mezzo-soprano in the title role (with Juan Diego Flórez as Elvino) and a historically informed rendering of *Norma* at the Dortmund Konzerthaus in June 2010, with Ms. Bartoli in the title role.

Much of the Ms. Bartoli’s 2009–2010 season was dedicated to a rediscovery of music written for the great Neapolitan *castrato* stars of the 18th century. The release of the record-breaking solo album *Sacrificium* in October 2009 was accompanied by concerts featuring this repertoire in all the major European musical capitals.

The following year saw Decca’s DVD release of the Zurich Opera production of Halévy’s tragicomic opera *Clari*, with Ms. Bartoli essaying the role created by Maria Malibran and Adam Fischer conducting the period-instrument orchestra La Scintilla. Also released on CD and digital download: *Sospiri*, a collection of intimate arias from Ms. Bartoli’s best-loved albums. Autumn 2012 marked the release of *Mission*, showcasing arias and duets by the Italian Baroque composer Agostino

Steffani. Ms. Bartoli’s collaborators in this multimedia project (featuring a special iPad app) include Philippe Jaroussky, the Coro della Radiotelevisione Svizzera, and the period orchestra I Barocchisti under conductor Diego Fasolis. In conjunction with this rapturously acclaimed project, Ms. Bartoli, I Barocchisti, and Mr. Fasolis undertook an extensive European tour in 2012–2013. Their recording of the Steffani *Stabat Mater* appeared in September 2013.

In 2012, Ms. Bartoli became Artistic Director of the Salzburg Whitsun Festival. In her first year, the theme was Cleopatra. In 2013, the festival was subtitled “Sacrifice—Opfer—Victim” and included a new milestone in Ms. Bartoli’s career: her stage debut as *Norma*, with Giovanni Antonini conducting the Orchestra La Scintilla. This production won the International Opera Award in London for the best production of 2013. The same month, May 2013, brought the audio release of Bellini’s opera starring Ms. Bartoli and conducted by Mr. Antonini.

March 2014 saw the release of two Rossini operas starring Ms. Bartoli on DVD/Blu-ray, *Le Comte Ory* and *Otello*. In April, she sang Desdemona in the latter opera in her triumphant return to the Paris stage after an absence of more than 20 years. And in October 2014, Decca issued *St. Petersburg*, featuring Baroque arias composed for the court of Catherine the Great and two of her predecessors. Rediscovered by Ms. Bartoli herself in St. Petersburg, these hidden musical treasures of Tsarist Russia also offer the first opportunity to hear the artist singing in Russian. The new project reunites her with I Barocchisti and Mr. Fasolis.

Ms. Bartoli has been awarded the Italian knighthood and is an “Accademico effettivo” of Santa Cecilia, Rome, a French Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur, and Officier de l’Ordre du Mérite, as well as an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music, London, and of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music. Most recently, she was given the prestigious Italian prize Bellini d’Oro, a Medalla de Oro al Mérito en

las Bellas Artes (one of the highest awards of the Spanish Ministry of Culture), and the Médaille Grand Vermeil de la Ville de Paris. On the occasion of the Handel anniversary year of 2009, Ms. Bartoli was made an honorary member of the advisory board of the Halle Handel House Foundation, and the following year she received the Halle Handel Prize. Also in 2010, she was awarded the renowned Danish Léonie Sonning Music Prize in Copenhagen, in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II, as well as an honorary doctorate by the venerable University College of Dublin. In 2012, she was awarded the Herbert von Karajan Prize in Baden-Baden, together with a rare Swiss Award for Culture, and she was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite Culturel by the Principality of Monaco.

To learn more, visit ceciliabartolionline.com.



Pianist Sergio Ciomei was born in Genova in 1965. In 1984, he graduated with the highest honors from the Niccolò Paganini Conservatory in his native city, where he studied piano with Franco Trabucco. He then

participated in master classes led by Muriel Chemin, Piero Rattalino, and Andrés Schiff. He first achieved international acclaim in 1991, when he won second prize at the International Music Competition at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. Parallel to his activities as a pianist, Mr. Ciomei studied harpsichord with Christophe Rousset and Jan Willem Jansen and fortepiano with Andreas Staier and Laura Alvini. From 1989 to 1994, he was the assistant maestro of Frans Brüggen and Kees Boeke during their Baroque music master classes at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena.

Mr. Ciomei maintains a busy concert schedule all around the world, performing at

important venues such as the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, the Auditorio Nacional de Música in Madrid, the Berlin Philharmonie, and the Teatro Regio in Torino. As a piano and harpsichord soloist, he has given recitals and performed under the baton of such maestros as Fabio Biondi, Frans Brüggen, Jean-Jacques Kantorow, and David del Pino Klinge. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with some of the leading artists of our time, including Giovanni Antonini, Patrick Gallois, and Maurice Steger.

Mr. Ciomei is one of the founding members of the ensemble Tripla Concordia, whose recordings have earned many international accolades. He frequently collaborates with prestigious Baroque orchestras, such as Il Giardino Armonico, Europa Galante, Le Musiche Nove, and La Scintilla, appearing on the stages of the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Grand Théâtre in Geneva, the Wigmore Hall in London, and the Musikverein in Vienna.

Mr. Ciomei's recordings appear on the Nuova Era, Opus 111, Dynamic, Cantus, Philharmonia, Stradivarius, EMI-Virgin, Challenge, Northwest Classics, Sony Classical, Decca, and Harmonia Mundi labels. Recently, his recording of Mozart sonatas for fortepiano and violin with Fabrizio Cipriani has been described as "one of the finest Mozart recordings of all time" by the Japan's *Ontomo Guide for the Best Chamber Music*.

In 2001, Mr. Ciomei began a collaboration with mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli, accompanying the great Italian singer in recitals held at some of the world's finest halls. In 2004, they embarked on a series of performances in the United States and Russia, with appearances at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles and the Great Hall of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. These concerts won unanimous acclaim from both critics and audiences.

Since 1999, Mr. Ciomei has developed his activities as a conductor, mainly specializing in the interpretation of Baroque music on period instruments. His performances of Bach, Telemann, Handel, and Mozart have

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

been received enthusiastically all across Europe. He has conducted the Tripla Concordia Orchestra at the Festival Antiqua in Genova, the Handel Festival in Halle, and elsewhere, collaborating with artists such as Alfredo Bernardini and Giovanni Antonini.

In 2007, the Kammerorchester Basel invited him as guest conductor for several Baroque projects. This resulted in a recording for Sony Classical, the award-winning *Affetti Barocchi* with alto Marijana Mijanović, followed by a successful concert tour with the singer and cellist Sol Gabetta. The latter tour

in turn led to a recording of cello concertos from the classical era with Ms. Gabetta and the Kammerorchester Basel for RCA Red Seal that reached the number-one position of the classical charts in Germany and Switzerland.

Besides his ongoing collaboration as pianist with Ms. Bartoli and Ms. Gabetta and his conducting opportunities, Mr. Ciomei continues to appear as a harpsichord soloist, a recent highlight being his interpretation in 2013 of Bach's "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 5 with Mr. Antonini and the Staatskapelle Berlin at the Berlin Philharmonie.