



Incidental Love and Death

Music of **Henry Purcell**

Pre-concert: Winds chamber music in foyer

Masque from ***Timon of Athens*** (Bacchus and Cupid)
Instrumental + Dance suite + 3 songs from ***Amphitryon***
Druids' Scene from *Bonduca*

Interval: Keyboard suite in the auditorium, String chamber music in foyer

Sacrifice Scene + Magicians' Dance from ***Circe***
Instrumental + Dance suite from ***Abdelazer***
Fame Scene from ***Indian Queen***
"Triumph, Victorious Love" from *Dioclesian*

Post-concert: Catches and (bawdy) songs in bar

"... All this whilst the Play-house Musick improved yearly, and is now arrived to greater perfection than ever I knew it ..."
(An 'old play-goer', looking back on 1660-90)

One of the earliest measures Charles II took on assuming the English throne in 1660 was to reopen, license and fund the London theatre scene, largely silenced for the previous two decades by civil war and Cromwell's puritan Commonwealth. Not only was this an opportunity to resurrect the dormant tradition of Shakespeare, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher: the new King's enthusiasm for lively music helped promote the emergence of a new sort of theatre experience, where instrumental music, dance, and solo and ensemble song were added to the plays – sometimes loosely woven into the storyline, but often simply as "incidental" music to entertain on another level.

Theatre-lovers often went to the same production several nights in a single week to hear their favourite singers, watch the elaborate dancing, be amazed by the rapid, complicated scene-changes and flying "machines", keep abreast of court and city gossip, flirt (and more), or simply be seen in impressive company. It was a varied evening of entertainment and social interaction –where the progress of the play itself was often of secondary importance.

Restoration Company takes a modern audience back to those colourful nights with a dynamic mix of solo and ensemble theatrical singing, instrumental music, and baroque dance numbers (but without the 3-hour play, alas...). *Incidental Love and Death* is an early-music concert experience with fringe-benefits: as well as the core entertainment, we present chamber music before, and irreverent catches and wicked songs in the bar after the show.

The enormously rich body of Restoration theatre music is a powerful mix of comic, moving and spectacular composition. Employing the appropriate musical forces, and supported by a sound musicological framework that helps restore the works to their original cultural, theatrical and choreographic context, Restoration Company presents this distinctive and captivating music in a refined, stylish and energetic presentation.

4 or 8 SATB, 4 dancers, 4 strings, 4 winds, keyboards, theorbo