

George Frideric Handel:  
**German Arias and Flute Sonatas**

presented by  
**The Wildwood Consort**

Melanie Downie Zupan      soprano  
Beverly Stafford          baroque flute  
Michael Wilhite            viola da gamba and theorbo  
Mark Jones                 joined by  
                                     harpsichord and organ

**Suite in D minor**, HWV 437:  
*Allemande*

**Meine Seele hört im Sehen**, HWV 207  
*My soul hears in seeing*

**Sonata for Flute in G major**, HWV 363b  
*Adagio – Allegro – Adagio – Bourree – Menuetto*

**Süße Stille, sanfte Quelle**, HWV 205  
*Sweet silence, soft source of calm tranquility*

**Singe, Seele, Gott zum Preise**, HWV 206  
*Sing, O my soul, sing in praise of God*

*~Intermission~*

**Suite in D minor**, HWV 437:  
*Sarabande*

**Süßer Blumen Ambralflocken**, HWV 204  
*Sweet blooms with your amber petals*

**Die ihr auf dunklen Grüften**, HWV 208  
*O all who dig vain Mammon / from dark caverns*

**Sonata for Flute in E minor**, HWV 379  
*Larghetto – Andante – Largo – Allegro – Presto*

**Flammende Rose, Zierde der Erden**, HWV 210  
*Flaming rose, earth's adornment*

**In den angenehmen Büschen**, HWV 209  
*In these delightful groves*

The nine German Arias (HWV 202-210) occupy a unique place in Handel's work. Composed between 1724 and 1726 at a time when the composer's reputation in London was well established, they demonstrate a continuing link to his birthplace, Halle, and his native language, German. Handel's only other extant works with German texts are his 1716 Passion oratorio and an early opera, *Alceste*. The German Arias also seem to be the closest Handel came to vocal chamber music; they are not part of a large-scale work such as an opera or oratorio, but more like a song cycle in the Schubert sense, perhaps intended for private domestic performance.

The texts of the German Arias are by B. H. Brockes (1680-1747). Born into a wealthy Hamburg merchant family and educated in law and philosophy at Halle, Brockes was in his time an eminent poet, intellectual, public citizen and supporter of music and the visual arts. It is possible that he and Handel first met at one of Brockes' weekly house concerts in Hamburg. *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott* (Earthly Delight in God) is a nine-volume collection of Brockes' poetry celebrating the manifestation of God in nature. Conceived as cantatas for future musical settings, the poems are for the most part lyrical paraphrases of biblical texts. They explore the beauty and orderliness of nature in minute detail, and invite the reader to contemplate the evidence of a divine hand.

For his German Arias, Handel excerpted favorite individual stanzas from Brockes' poems. The settings are for soprano and one unspecified obligato instrument plus continuo. The obligato instrument (flute in today's concert) plays a role equal to the voice, with carefully interwoven melodies similar to a trio sonata. All arias except HWV 209 are in the da capo form. Handel's writing is replete with musical devices which illustrate the falling of petals, plodding in dark caverns, darting of light and shadow, and other images found in the poetry.

Handel's solo sonatas have been subject to much controversy as to attribution, proper instrumentation, alternate versions and other matters. The manuscript of the sonata in G major (HWV 363b) is lost; some early editions specify "Flauto" (recorder). The sonata has sometimes been claimed by oboists due to the stuttering trumpet-call of its Allegro movement, however the sighs and pauses of the first Adagio seem particularly flute-like. The E minor sonata (HWV 379) is the only sonata that survives in a Handel autograph labeled "Traverso e Basso". It is a series of movements originally belonging to other sonatas, capably reworked for flute by the composer himself.