

A woman with dark hair, wearing a vibrant red, strapless, floor-length gown with a long train, is leaning against a large, weathered stone column. She is looking to her left, with her right hand resting on her forehead and her left hand on her hip. The background shows other stone columns and a bright, slightly blurred outdoor setting.

# Vibrant Venice

Lotte Bovi & l'Ora Blù

trptk

# Vibrant Venice

Lotte Bovi  
l'Ora Blù

Nicola Porpora

## Salve Regina in F major

|   |                                |      |
|---|--------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Salve Regina                   | 4:00 |
| 2 | Ad te clamamus                 | 2:05 |
| 3 | Ad te suspiramus               | 2:12 |
| 4 | Eia ergo, advocata nostra      | 1:18 |
| 5 | Illos tuos misericordes oculos | 2:54 |
| 6 | O clemens, o pia               | 2:28 |

Antonio Vivaldi

## La verità in cimento, RV 739

|   |                           |      |
|---|---------------------------|------|
| 7 | Sinfonia                  | 1:59 |
| 8 | Solo quella guancia bella | 2:57 |

## l'Olimpiade, RV 725

|   |                            |      |
|---|----------------------------|------|
| 9 | Mentre dormi, amor fomenti | 7:02 |
|---|----------------------------|------|

## Juditha Triumphans, RV 644

|    |                          |      |
|----|--------------------------|------|
| 10 | Armatae face et anguibus | 3:27 |
|----|--------------------------|------|

## Il Giustino, RV 717

|    |                       |      |
|----|-----------------------|------|
| 11 | Vedrò con mio diletto | 4:57 |
|----|-----------------------|------|

Niccolò Jommelli

## La Betulia liberata

|    |                           |      |
|----|---------------------------|------|
| 12 | Prigionier che fa ritorno | 8:45 |
|----|---------------------------|------|

## About the album

At a certain point, Vivaldi found me. While singing his Dixit Dominus, he suddenly descended 'in' and discovered my voice in his music, or was it the other way around? From that moment on, I started singing many arias composed by him. Each time, I was surprised by the combination of simplicity, drama, and, at the same time, the lightness of his pieces without becoming superficial. His vocal music is so well written for the singing voice, indicating his profound understanding of the possibilities of the vocal instrument and his desire to serve it with his music.

During this process, I also discovered interesting rhythmic structures that I recognized from South American music, my first musical love. Syncopations in the violins, accents that momentarily catch the breath and sometimes suggest irregularities, pauses that speak volumes. In short, an exciting mix of contrasts between question and answer, loud, soft, whispering, sighing, screaming, but always elegant and dance-like.

In the time of Corona, the idea of recording an album with a baroque orchestra emerged. Through various channels, funding was secured, making it possible to realize the album. Along the way, I also found two other composers from 18th-century Venice with whom I had a similar vocal experience: Nicola Porpora and Niccolò Jommelli. They share that typical baroque tension; you can hear the heartbeat of the Vibrant Venice of the 18th century in all three.

With this album, together with the orchestra l'Ora Blu', I want to showcase how rhythmic the music of these composers can be, how many possibilities it offers to the soloist to create a completely unique interpretation of the pieces. As a result, this album is also very personal to me. Each piece has a different atmosphere, presenting a different aspect of the emotional spectrum of the singer and the orchestra:

Compassionate in Porpora's Salve Regina, lovely in Mentre dormi, playful in Solo

quella, yearning in *Vedro con mio diletto*, boiling with anger in *Armatae face et anguibus*, and triumphant in *Prigionier che fa ritorno*.

It's not surprising that emotions are so prominent in the various pieces, as this music is rich in affect, a principle from Baroque music where the emotion is clearly expressed in the music. The affect theory is a late Baroque concept, specifically related to music. It associates various musical elements, keys, and instruments with feelings. For example, sorrow should be expressed with a slow, sluggish, and drowsy melody, interspersed with many sighs, while hate is represented by repellent, rough harmony and a similar melody.

A fundamental aspect of the theory is the principle that each composition (or, in the case of composite forms, each part of a musical piece) should express only one affect. This is to prevent confusion (in the listener).

## Why the title *Vibrant Venice*?

Venice, during the time of Vivaldi, Jommelli, and Porpora, was a city pulsating with musicality: everyone made music, lived from opera to opera, the baker delivered his bread singing, people spontaneously sang songs on the streets. In short, Venice was a bustling city, vibrating with the most beautiful tones and harmonies, produced by its residents and composers.

The three composers on this CD have one thing in common: they all worked at two of the 4 orphanages that Venice was rich in, the *Ospedale della Pietà* and the *Ospedale degli Incurabili*. In the 18th century, orphaned children were placed in orphanages that also guaranteed a solid musical education.

Vivaldi taught violin and later worked as a composer at the *Ospedale della Pietà*, Porpora and Jommelli were both associated with the *Ospedale degli Incurabili*. They wrote numerous works for these young students. The *Ospedale della Pietà* was an orphanage specifically for girls. The girls from this *Ospedale* became

world-famous, and people came from all over Europe to Venice to witness the singing angels behind bars, whose faces were invisible.

These composers must be seen against the backdrop of the ever-moving Venice. The composers contributed significantly to the city enveloped in sounds, where carnival was celebrated for 6 months a year.

Lotte Bovi and the l'Orchestra Blu have tried to capture this dynamism in a very personal performance. With this album, they attempt to make the heartbeat of the vibrant Venice of yesteryear resonate. The free republic of Venice where, alongside life, the fine arts were celebrated, where people partied, made music, loved, sang, and gambled, but at the same time, worked incredibly hard. In short, a Vibrant Venice.

## The Italian opera and their male roles

Many of the arias performed on this album are sung by a man, meaning a male role. Composers in the 18th century wrote the male roles for castrati, but also for female voices that took on the role of a man and had the same tessitura as the castrati. The girls in the Ospedales sang all parts, from soprano to bass. In Germany, this became known as 'Hosenrollen' (trouser roles). On this album, many of the arias are sung from a male perspective to a beloved, or, as in the case of the squire Vagaus in 'Armatae face et anguibus,' out of loyalty to his general. Only 'Solo quella' is sung by a female character and is about her love for a man.

Recurring themes in Vivaldi's operas include subjects such as Turkey, Olympic games, battles, and numerous references to exotic destinations. This could explain why some pieces also have rhythmic similarities to the syncopated music from those regions.

## Nicola Porpora (1686 - 1768)

The Neapolitan Nicola Porpora was initially a singer, but due to a lack of talent, he did not really break through in that role. However, he played a significant role in the vocal training of the great castrati of his time; Farinelli and Caffarelli were famous pupils of his. He taught at various conservatories in Italy, and in Vienna, he was a renowned and feared singing and composition teacher. In addition to being a singing instructor, he was also a composer. He held a position at the Ospedale degli Incurabili in Venice, where in 1730, he composed the cantata *Salve Regina in fa maggiore*. Porpora composed numerous operas and sacred works characterized by rich embellishments and long phrases for the voice.

The version of the Catholic *Salve Regina* composed by Porpora is immediately, from the start of the orchestra, a call to compassion. The Virgin Mary symbolizes empathy and gentle forces. In her, we find solace. All these feelings are audible in the vocal line, which forms a continuous harmonious symbiosis with the orchestra. In a question-and-answer game, singer and orchestra share joy, tears, scourging, and hope, and in the final part, the pure love for the Virgin Mary. Porpora wrote this cantata for the girls of the Ospedale degli Incurabili in 1730.

Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiæ,  
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve

Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevææ

Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes  
in hac lacrimarum valle.

We greet thee, our Queen, our Mother of  
Mercy,  
our life, our sweetness, our hope.

O hear us when we are crying,  
for wretched we are, the children of Eve,

O hear us when we are sighing,  
groaning and moaning in this valley of tears.

Eia, ergo, advocata nostra,

Illos tuos

mesericordes oculos ad nos converte;  
Et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,  
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.

O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

O look at us, advocate, evil-adversely,

Look at us with thine eyes full of mercy;  
O show us, after our exile,  
Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb,  
we urge thee to end our trial,

O trusting, forgiving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

## Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741), the renowned Venetian violinist and composer with the red hair, was initially a priest, hence his nickname 'the red priest.' However, he was not destined for that role. He quickly followed in the footsteps of his violin-playing father, and in 1703, he became a violin teacher at the Ospedale della Pietà, where he elevated the performances of the girls to a high level. The girls played all instruments and sang all parts. Under his guidance, the concerts of the 'singing and playing angels' became famous, attracting audiences from all over Europe who came to listen to the musically talented girls behind bars.

Soon, he began composing pieces for the girls of Ospedale. The piece *Armatae face et angibus* on this album is from the oratorio *Juditha Triumphans* and was originally performed in its entirety by the 60-member ensemble of the Ospedale. Vivaldi also seems to have been a remarkable violinist, frequently giving concerts in Venice itself at events, sometimes solo and sometimes with some of his most talented students.

What stands out in his way of composing is his consideration for all instruments, allowing individual singers or instrumentalists to shine in the pieces he composed. It was usually a challenge but always full of opportunities for individual expression.



The opera "La verità in cimento," with a libretto by Giovanni Palazzi, is Vivaldi's 13th opera and premiered during the carnival in Venice in 1720. The content is as follows:

Mamud had two sons, one by his favourite Damira and one by the Sultana Rustena. He had them exchanged at birth, so that Melindo, in truth the son of Damira, is thought to be the legitimate heir, a position rightfully held by Zelim. When marriage is proposed between Melindo and Rosane, the heiress to another Sultanate (who is in fact beloved by Zelim), Mamud resolves to reveal the true state of affairs. After various twists and turns, Zelim inherits the larger portion of his empire, while Melindo contents himself with a secondary kingdom (Rosane's country) and is allowed to marry the fickle princess Rosane. This leaves everyone satisfied.

In the aria *Solo quella guancia bella* right at the beginning of the opera, Rosanna sings about her love for her future fiancé: "He is the most charming, the best, and should I ever make a misstep and be unfaithful, then I may be delivered to hell."

Solo quella guancia bella  
vezzosetta, superbetta  
ha il mio, la mia pietà.

Se crudele, se infedele  
al tuo mesto amor son io,  
giova al mio la crudeltà.

Only this beautiful face,  
gracious and proud,  
has my love and my devotion.

If I were cruel or unfaithful  
to your sad love,  
mine would cruelty deserve.

Vivaldi's opera *l'Olimpiade*, with a libretto by Pietro Metastasio, premiered in 1734 at the Teatro San Angelo in Venice. The content of the opera is as follows:

The story is played out against the backdrop of the Olympic Games (the ancient version, naturally), at which the prize is the hand of the princess Aristeia. Licida has fallen in love with her and, being no athlete himself, prevails on his friend Megacle to compete under his name, unaware that Megacle and Aristeia have long had an understanding. Licida in the meantime has forgotten his own love for Argene. Complications and misunderstandings inevitably arise, ending in an unsuccessful assassination attempt by Licida on Aristeia's father King Clistene, who, it then transpires, is really his father, too. The 'correct' couplings are duly restored.

In the aria *Mentre dormi, amor fomenti* for string orchestra and natural horn (hunting horn), Licida addresses his friend Megacle, who pretends to be asleep after Licida has confided in him about being in love with Aristeia as well. Licida wishes him a peaceful sleep, but gradually, the content of the aria takes on a more erotic component as Licida also sings to and wishes Aristeia, the object of his love, to be carried away by the slow stream of dreams. The word "zefiro" (breeze or gentle wind) used here is a metaphor frequently employed in the Baroque era to signify the carrying away of emotions.

Mentre dormi, amor fomenti  
il piacer d' sonni tuoi  
con l'idea del mio piacer.

Abbia il rio passi più lenti;  
e sospenda i moti suoi  
ogni zeffiro leggier.

While you're asleep, love foment  
the pleasure of your dreams  
with the awareness of my pleasure.

May the stream flow more slowly;  
and may even the slightest breeze  
suspend its movements.

*Judith Triumphans* was composed by Vivaldi to commemorate the victory of the Republic of Venice over Turkey in the year 1716. He composed this theatrical

oratorio with Latin text by Iacopo Cassetti for the girls of the Ospedale della Pietà. All roles, including that of Vagaus, the squire of General Holofernes, were sung by the girls. The content of the opera is as follows:

The Assyrian king Nebuchadnezzar sends an army against Israel to demand overdue tributes. Under the leadership of the general Holofernes, the Assyrians lay siege to the town of Bethulia and are about to conquer it. The young Jewish widow Judith goes to him to implore mercy. He falls in love with her, and she indulges him. After a rich banquet and having drunk much wine, Holofernes falls asleep. Judith beheads him, flees the enemy camp, and returns victorious to Bethulia.

In the aria *Armatae face et anguibus*, Vagaus calls upon the 'furies' (evil spirits) to avenge the barbarians responsible for the murder (decapitation) of his general Holofernes. The accompaniment captures the galloping of his horse as a musical affect.

Armatae face et anguibus  
a caeco regno squallido  
furoris sociae barbari  
furiae venite ad nos.

Come, you allies of barbarian furor,  
from your blind, wretched kingdom,  
armed with torches and serpents,  
come to us, furies!

Morte, flagello, stragibus  
vindictam tanti funeris  
irata nostra pectora  
duces docete vos.

Tech our enraged hearts  
to avenge such a murder  
with death, scourge and slaughter —  
Teach us, commanders!

The opera *Il Giustino* from 1724, with a libretto by Nicolo Beregan, was composed by Vivaldi for the carnival season in Rome. One aria from this opera has become particularly well-known, namely the aria *Vedrò con mio diletto*, sung by

Anastasio, and has been performed and recorded by many contemporary male and female singers. The content of the opera is as follows:

Constantinople, just after 500 AD. Fortuna promises the farmer Giustino a throne. By rescuing the beautiful Leocasta, he arrives at the court of her brother, Emperor Anastasio. Subsequently, he also liberates Empress Arianna from the hands of the tyrant Vitaliano. Vitaliano's brother, Andronico, disguised as a woman, pursues Leocasta, but the true villain is the sycophantic general Amanzio. Giustino turns out to be Vitaliano's brother as well, thus of noble blood, and exposes Amanzio. Anastasio grants him Leocasta's hand and makes him co-emperor.

In the aria *Vedrò con mio diletto*, Anastasio anticipates the reunion with his beloved Arianna. It is evident that he is far away from her and ardently longs to see her again. "Soul of my soul, heart of my heart." In an almost manic experience of his true love, his emotions shift from intense longing to fear of losing love, to possessiveness, and restrained passion so as not to appear 'needy.'

For this aria, Lotte and the orchestra sought a new way of accompaniment. The intention was to convey the intimacy of the piece and capture the various facets of experiencing love in a serenade for lute, vocals, and gentle accompaniment of strings and continuo.

Vedrò con mio diletto  
l'alma dell'alma mia  
il cor del mio core, pien di contento.

Delighted I will see again  
the soul of my soul,  
the heart of my heart, full of contentment.

E se dal caro oggetto  
lungi convien che sia  
sospirerò penando ogni momento...

And should I be far away  
from that dear body,  
I would sigh, day and night, full of sorrow...

## Niccolò Jomelli (1714 - 1744)

Niccolò Jommelli, hailing from a village near Naples, was strongly influenced as a composer by the work of the German composer Johann Adolf Hasse. He is slightly younger than the other two composers, and in his music, you can already hear the influence of a new musical trend.

He wrote numerous operas for opera houses before joining the service of the Ospedale degli Incurabili in Venice in 1745. For the girls of this orphanage, he composed various sacred works, including the one performed on this album, 'Prigionier che fa ritorno,' from his oratorio 'La Betulia Liberata.'

From 1753 onward, he resided in Stuttgart, where he influenced the German opera scene with his Italian style.

Jommelli's *Betulia liberata* is an oratorio from 1743 composed to a successful libretto by Pietro Metastasio. It is also based on the biblical story of Judith, who beheads General Holofernes, but with different characters than Vivaldi's *Juditha Triumphans*.

In the aria *Prigionier che fa ritorno*, Ozia, the prince of Betulia, sings about the triumph over the enemy, the prisoner who returns from darkness and stands in the light again. It is a song of triumph and hope for better times.

Prigionier, che fa ritorno  
dagli orrori al disereo,  
chiude I lumi a' rai del giorno,  
e pur tanto il sospirò.

Ma cosifra poco arrive  
a soffrir la chiara luce:  
chèl'avviva e lo conduce  
lo splendor chel'abbagliò.

The prisoner who returns  
from horror to serenity,  
blinks at the sunlit day,  
although he sighed for it.

Soon enough he is able  
to suffer the clear light,  
which brings him to life  
and the splendour which dazzled him.



## Lotte Bovi

Lotte Bovi studied singing at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. After completing her studies, she sang with the Collegium Vocale Ghent under the direction of Philippe Herreweghe. She also performed roles at the Flemish Opera. Lotte sings a diverse repertoire ranging from Monteverdi to Bizet, including Bach. She presents this repertoire in various formations and under different conductors.

With Kees Wieringa, she recorded Simeon ten Holt's *Canto Ostinato* at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. Additionally, Lotte is the creator and performer of performances where, alongside the musical aspect, visual elements play a significant role. She was part of the Marrakesh Biennale 2018 with a performance based on Ravel's *Sheherazade*, featuring a floating dress, 3D video mapping, and a sound installation.

## l'Ora Blù

l'Ora Blu is composed of some of the finest baroque instrumentalists that the Netherlands has to offer. Together with violinist Barbara Erdner, they sought instrumentalists who are open to a new form of making baroque music, ones who recognize the importance of the rhythmic pulse. In consultation with Lotte and first violinist Helmut Riebl, they opted for an expressive, vibrant interpretation of the pieces recorded on this album.

**Violin I** Helmut Riebl, Aleksandra Kiatkowska & Sebastiaan van Vucht

**Violin II** Barbara Erdner, Alexandre Turmel & Jiska ter Bals

**Violoncello da spalla** Yun Kim

**Cello** Diederik van Dijk

**Double bass** Alon Portal

**Lute, theorbo & baroque guitar** Harjo Neutkens

**Organ** Jaap Jan Steensma

**Natural horn** Federico Cuevas Ruis





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In the heart of what we do lies a simple truth: music should be felt as much as heard. Our label is founded on the idea that the purest form of listening replicates the magic of a live performance. It's not about grandeur; it's about authenticity, about capturing the essence of the moment when music comes alive.

With each recording, we try to craft an auditory journey, where the walls of your listening space dissolve to reveal the vaulted grandeur of a concert hall, the sacred quiet of a church, or the intimate warmth of a studio. Our role is that of a careful curator — we blend into the background, allowing the artists and the space to speak through the music.

We choose artists who resonate with this philosophy: musicians who inspire us not just with their talent, but with their drive to push boundaries whilst maintaining a heartfelt connection to their audience. It's this balance that guides our collaborations and helps us fulfill our pledge to bring forth recordings that honour the integrity of high fidelity sound, and the essence of musical storytelling.

At TRPTK, we quietly step back and let artistry take the spotlight. We're here to capture rather than enhance, and to deliver not just the sound, but the very soul of the music to you.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads 'Brandon Heintz'.

*founder & senior recording and mastering engineer*

# Equipment used on this recording

## Microphones

Josephson C617 with Microtech Gefell MK221 capsules *main mics*

Josephson C42 *height mics*

## Microphone preamplifiers

Grace Design m801mk2

## AD/DA conversion (11.2MHz 1bit)

Merging Technologies Hapi mkII

Merging Technologies Anubis

Grimm Audio CC2 *master clock*

Weiss Engineering Saracon *samplerate converter*

## Monitoring

Grimm Audio LS1be *main loudspeakers*

Grimm Audio SB1 *subwoofers*

KEF LS50 Meta *height loudspeakers*

Hegel C55 *amplifier*

## Cabling

Purecable Optimus Link *microphone cables*

Purecable Optimus Power *power cables*

Grimm Audio TPR XLR *microphone cables*

Grimm Audio TPR8 *breakout cables*

## Tuning

Pura Power Supplies the Dodo *linear power supply*

Pura Power Supplies the Sauroпода *line conditioner*

Pura Power Supplies the Nautilus *power distributor*

Computer Audio Design GC3 *ground conditioner*

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## Credits

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[www.trptk.com](http://www.trptk.com)