

# RED PRIEST

PIERS ADAMS – recorders ■ DAVID GREENBERG – violin  
ANGELA EAST – cello ■ HOWARD BEACH – harpsichord

## *PIRATES OF THE BAROQUE*

*Stolen masterworks and long-lost jewels of the baroque era.*

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750) arr. RED PRIEST

**Preludio (from Partita BWV 1006)**

GEORG PHILLIP TELEMANN (1681-1767)

**Gypsy Sonata in A minor**

*Largo / Vivace / Affetuoso / Allegro*

TRAD arr. DAVID GREENBERG

**Come Ashore Jolly Tar With Your Trousers On**

ROBERT MACKINTOSH (1745-1807)

**Gavotte with Variations**

JACOB VAN EYCK (1590-1657)

**The English Nightingale**

TOMASSO ALBINONI (1671-1751) / REMO GIAZZOTO (1910-1998) arr. RED PRIEST

**Adagio**

ANTONIO VIVALDI (1676-1741) arr. RED PRIEST

**Concerto in G major “The Sea Storm” (“La Tempesta di Mare”) RV 433**

*Allegro / Largo / Presto*

### INTERMISSION

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH arr. RED PRIEST

**Toccatà and Fugue in D minor (BWV 565)**

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

**Prelude from Suite No. 1 for Cello**

BACH/O'CAROLAN/DOW/TRAD arr. DAVID GREENBERG

**Bach on G, or “We won't let her go till you give us back our boat”**

*Allegro / Poppy Leaf Hornpipe / The Princess Royal Hornpipe I*

*The Princess Royal Hornpipe II (traditional Cape Breton setting) / Miss Charters' Reel*

GIUSEPPE TARTINI (1692-1770) arr. RED PRIEST

**Senti lo Mare (Listen to the Sea)**

JEAN-MARIE LECLAIR (1697-1764) arr. RED PRIEST

**Tambourin**

ARCANGELO CORELLI (1653-1713) arr. RED PRIEST

**Concert Fantasy on “La Folia”**

## PROGRAM NOTES

The popular Hollywood image of pirates as likeable, swashbuckling rogues is certainly at odds with the gory reality of their trade, and to equate such scoundrels to our most learned baroque composers may seem fanciful in the extreme. But on closer inspection there are parallels which, if nothing else, ignite the imagination and allow us to take an alternative look at one of the most colourful periods in musical history.

The leading musicians from this time were pioneers and adventurers, riding the seas of change with wild abandon, ever searching for new musical treasures to titillate the ears and move the souls of the public. Only in retrospect has the mythology of highbrow, rule-bound men of quill and parchment been created; the reality was much more down to earth, the majority of composers living boozily, philandering, extravagantly bohemian lives, intent on maximising their profits through, if necessary, dubious means. Yet ironically it is from this very atmosphere of skulduggery that some of the greatest works of art were produced.

Johann Sebastian Bach was a prolific arranger of the works of others, taking inspiration in particular from Italian composers such as Vivaldi and Marcello—but in this program we have turned the tables on him through our own arrangements of the great master's music, with four-part re-workings of two of his most famous works: the E-major Preludio for solo violin and the great Toccata and Fugue in D minor. David Greenberg's "Bach on G"—subtitled "We won't let her go till you give us back our boat"—takes things even further, as an innocent violin sonata is hijacked by marauding pirates!

The theme of musical piracy extends from the poaching of themes (was the wealthy Georg Phillip Telemann perhaps guilty of this crime as he stole the tunes of poor gypsies from Eastern Europe?) to the false attribution of famous composers' names to the works of lesser-known authors—a common practise among the unscrupulous music publishers of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The 'Albinoni' *Adagio* may well be a recent example of such identity theft, as its composer, Remo Giazzoto, was never able to show the world the fragment of Albinoni's music upon which it was supposedly based, and one wonders whether he simply came up with a clever way of marketing his own music!

The life of Antonio Vivaldi—the original Red Priest of Venice—is a case study in baroque extravagance. Indeed he was described by the English composer William Hayes as a man with "too much mercury in his constitution," a characteristic in plentiful display in the pounding seas of his famous *Tempesta di Mare* concerto. As with most of the works in this program, this piece has been subjected to our own form of musical piracy, stolen and freely adapted from the orchestral originals - a common enough practise in the baroque era, when arrangements of the works of others were rife, but we confess that our imagined arrival of a pirate ship onto Vivaldi's stormy seascape may stretch the point a bit...

Elsewhere in the program our transcriptions range from plaintive simplicity of Tartini's *Senti Lo Mare* to the sparkle of Leclair's celebrated *Tambourin*. In our adaptation of Arcangelo Corelli's famous 'Folia' Variations we take the art of arrangement to its logical conclusion, and while it may not fit the currently accepted boundaries of 'authenticity' we hope that it is taken in the truly baroque spirit with which it is intended.

Finally, the search for music from the past can often have the sense of a pirate treasure hunt as one searches the past for forgotten musical gems. Although hardly household names in the manner of Bach, Vivaldi and Telemann, the 18<sup>th</sup> century violinist “Red Rob” Mackintosh (named, like Vivaldi, for his red hair and fiery temperament), and the 17<sup>th</sup> century recorder virtuoso Jacob van Eyck represent the tip of an iceberg of musical jewels frozen in time. — *Piers Adams 2009*

## RED PRIEST

Red Priest is the only early music group in the world to have been compared in the press to the Rolling Stones, Jackson Pollock, the Marx Brothers, Spike Jones and the Cirque du Soleil. This extraordinary acoustic foursome has been described by music critics as “visionary and heretical,” “outrageous yet compulsive.” “wholly irreverent and highly enlightened,” “completely wild and deeply imaginative,” with a “red-hot wicked sense of humour” and a “break-all-rules, rock-chamber concert approach to early music.”

Founded in 1997, and named after the flame-haired priest, Antonio Vivaldi, Red Priest has given several hundred sell-out concerts in many of the world’s most prestigious festivals, including the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Moscow December Nights Festival, Schwetzingen Festival, Prague Spring Festival, Ravinia Festival, Bermuda Festival, and in most European countries, Japan, Australia, and throughout North and Central America. The group has been the subject of hour-long TV profiles for NHK (Japan) and ITV (UK) - the latter for the prestigious South Bank Show in 2005, which documented the launch of the Red Hot Baroque Show, an electrifying marriage of old music with the latest light and video technology.

In its regular line-up Red Priest comprises recorder player Piers Adams, violinist Julia Bishop, cellist Angela East and harpsichordist Howard Beach; for most North American tours since 2006 the group has collaborated with the Canadian Baroque/Cape-Breton violinist David Greenberg in place of Julia Bishop. These musicians have redefined the art of period performance, creating a virtual orchestra through their creative arrangements, performing from memory with swashbuckling virtuosity, heart-on-sleeve emotion and compelling stagecraft. Their repertoire ranges from obscure 17th century sonatas to the most famous works of Bach and Vivaldi, all presented in imaginative programmes with filmic titles: "Priest on the Run," "Nightmare in Venice," "Pirates of the Baroque," "Johann, I'm Only Dancing!"

Red Priest’s latest venture is the launch of its own record label, Red Priest Recordings, distributed globally by Nimbus. Alongside the re-release of the group’s highly acclaimed back-catalogue is the brand new recording, “Pirates of the Baroque.” Many exciting projects are planned for the coming months, including solo recordings from group members, an all-Bach CD, a DVD of the Four Seasons and downloadable sheet music. Visit their website for full details: [www.redpriest.com](http://www.redpriest.com)

**Piers Adams** was recently heralded in the *Washington Post* as “*the reigning recorder virtuoso in the world* “. He has performed in numerous festivals and at premiere concert halls throughout the world, including London’s Royal Festival, Wigmore and Queen Elizabeth Halls, as soloist with orchestras including the Philharmonia, the English Sinfonia, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the Academy of Ancient Music, the Singapore Symphony and the BBC Symphony. Piers has made several solo CDs reflecting an eclectic taste, ranging from his award-winning Vivaldi début disc to David Bedford’s Recorder Concerto—one of many major works written for him. He has also researched, arranged and recorded a variety of romantic showpieces, which are a mainstay of his recital programs.

**David Greenberg** taught himself folk fiddle tunes by ear as a young child growing up in Maryland. In the mid 80s he studied baroque violin with Stanley Ritchie. Greenberg spent the 1990s with Tafelmusik while developing a speciality in Scottish baroque-folk music, recording three groundbreaking CDs in this genre with the group Puirt A Baroque. He immersed himself in Cape Breton traditional music and co-authored the popular treatise on Cape Breton fiddle music, the DunGreen Collection, with his wife, Kate Dunlay. He lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In addition to Red Priest, regular collaborators include his own Tempest ensemble, David McGuinness, Chris Norman and Doug MacPhee.

**Angela East** is widely respected as one of the most brilliant and dynamic performers in the period instrument world, praised in *The Times*, London, for the “*elemental power*” of her cello playing. She has given numerous concerto performances in London's Queen Elizabeth and Wigmore Halls, and has performed as soloist and continuo cellist with many of Europe's leading baroque orchestras. Among her impressive list of concert credits are La Scala, Milan, Sydney Opera House, Versailles and Glyndebourne. In 1991 Angela formed “The Revolutionary Drawing Room” which performs chamber works from the revolutionary period in Europe on original instruments, and whose first eight CDs have received glowing reviews world-wide. Her CD recording of the complete Bach Cello Suites will be released in 2008.

**Howard Beach**’s uniquely wide-ranging style of keyboard playing has been developed through years of partnering fine musicians in many different fields of music, as well as his own experience as an accomplished singer and violinist. Since 1989 he has worked regularly with Piers Adams in concert and in the recording studio as both harpsichordist and pianist - including several performances in London's Wigmore Hall and tours throughout Europe, Canada and the Far East. He has also performed and recorded as a concerto soloist and continuo player with Les Arts Florissants, the Apollo Chamber Orchestra and the London Mozart Players. Howard broadcasts frequently on radio and has been consultant and performer on programs for UK's Channel 4 TV.