

## **Aulos Ensemble Bio**

Formed in 1973 by five Juilliard graduates, THE AULOS ENSEMBLE was at the forefront of a movement that was to capture the imagination of the American listening public. In 1978 with the release of their recording, "Masterpieces of the High Baroque", AULOS' reputation for exhilarating performances informed with scholarly insight was firmly established. In those groundbreaking years, the group's innovative programming featured a blend of flute, oboe, violin, cello, and harpsichord, later adding a viola da gamba. With its conservatory based training, Aulos brought an uncompromising standard of excellence in performance that resulted in invitations from virtually all of this country's major chamber music presenters. This exposure helped create a new audience awareness for the rich rewards of this repertoire performed on "period instruments" and comments such as "scintillating", "virtuosic", and "authentic baroque performance at its best" from America's most respected music critics.

In the 1980's, AULOS began two projects that brought the joy of its music-making to an ever-widening public and for the first time attracted international critical attention. The group's first recording for the Musical Heritage Society, "Original Telemann" was released in 1981 in connection with the composer's tercentenary, and was universally hailed as one of the most accomplished and significant observances of the Telemann year, receiving the "Critic's Choice" award of High Fidelity/Musical America Magazine. Since then, the Ensemble has released over a dozen CDs on the same label, including 2- CD sets of Bach, Handel, and Vivaldi, as well as the complete "Essercizii Musici" of Telemann on 5 CDs. This discography is unique among American "period-instrument" chamber groups.

AULOS' other project in the '80s was the establishment of its own concert series at home in New York City. This series featured collaborations with guest artists from Europe and America who had made major reputations in this field. These collaborative concerts, exploring a highly unusual repertoire that was impossible to perform in other contexts, provided its New York audiences with cutting edge performances as well as giving the Ensemble members vital artistic stimulation. Among the stars of the "original instrument" movement that appeared with the Ensemble in those

years were harpsichordists Trevor Pinnock and Albert Fuller, violinists Jaap Schroeder and Stanley Ritchie, cellist Anner Bylsma, oboist Michel Piguet, and vocalists Jan de Gaetani, Bethany Beardslee, Charles Bressler, and Julianne Baird.

The 1980's also saw the beginnings of what has become a wonderful tradition for New York concertgoers--the AULOS "Christmas Concerts" in front of the Neapolitan Christmas Tree at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. These concerts, described by the New York Times as "one of the most charming musical celebrations of the season" have been given annually in the magical setting of the Medieval Sculpture Court and have featured a variety of guest artists. A recording of one such program, entitled "A Baroque Christmas" and featuring the soprano, Julianne Baird, was recorded for MHS/ Musicmasters and is available to millions of people throughout the world through the Metropolitan Museum Catalogue. The popularity of these concerts and the recording encouraged AULOS to begin to offer them on tour, bringing the special affinity of this repertoire and the seasonal festivities to audiences throughout the country. Over the past seasons the eminent American vocalists Dawn Upshaw, Sanford Sylvan, and Derek Lee Ragin are some of the artists who have appeared with AULOS in these presentations.

In the 1990's AULOS began expanding its repertoire to include "one on a part" performances of some of the best known and favorite baroque Suites and Concerti, including the Bach 5th Brandenburg Concerto and the Concerto for Oboe and Violin as well as Vivaldi's concerti The Four Seasons. These programs, referred to as "The Baroque Big Band", are performed with from 8 to 10 artists. An all-Bach CD, part of the continuing discography on MHS, features the Ensemble in this configuration. Additionally, AULOS began giving numerous master classes and lecture-demonstrations in 17th and 18th-century performance practice at colleges and universities throughout the country. With its members serving on faculties of various schools of music and institutes specializing in historically informed performance, the Ensemble is responsible for training a new generation of American early music performers. AULOS concerts are frequently broadcast by National Public Radio from venues such as The Frick Collection in New York, Live at WolfTrap, and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Most recently, its instrumental Christmas program, "Joyeux Noel" was heard throughout the country repeatedly on NPR's "Performance Today".

Now, in its 4th decade, AULOS continues to explore new projects and develop outlets for its music-making. The 2006-7 season saw its first presentation of Handel's masque *Acis and Galatea*, done in a version approximating the size of the composer's vision for the piece—5 singers and 8 instrumentalists without a conductor—and it was a huge hit with presenters, audiences and critics. The *New York Times* wrote "In all, it was an utter delight". The Ensemble has developed a true chamber orchestra program as well, featuring Handel's complete *Water Music* in a performance with between 17 and 23 players. Where appropriate, AULOS has created residencies in which the group and its guests teach and coach young professionals and then join them in these performances. And 15 years after the release of their Christmas CD from the Metropolitan Museum, the Ensemble and Julianne Baird collaborated on *In Dulci Jubilo*, a recording featuring much of the new material uncovered in those many years of Christmas concerts. This CD was released in the fall of 2006 to critical acclaim, and was the beginning of a new series of recordings for Centaur Records. It was followed in 2008 by AULOS' unique version of two of Rameau's wonderful opera suites from *Les Indes Galantes* and *Les Fêtes d'hébé*, based on suggestions by the composer in 'short-score' manuscripts—the first recording ever done in this chamber ensemble setting. Most recently, the Ensemble released "The Bach Family Album" which the *American Record Guide* described as "enthraling".

In 2014-15 AULOS is celebrating its 40th anniversary and continues to offer new collaborations and programs. Dominique Labelle is featured as a guest in its latest Centaur release: "The Handel Album" (2014) and Sherezade Panthaki sang "If Music be the Food of Love..." with the Ensemble for the first time last season.