



## Leonardo García Alarcón Proms at ... Cadogan Hall 2 harpsichord/organ/director

When Argentine-born conductor Leonardo García Alarcón first arrived in Europe at the age of 20, he headed straight for the Continent's biggest, most historic libraries – including the Vatican, Lisbon, Paris and Vienna. 'The forgotten music I found was enough to serve several generations!' He founded his period-instrument ensemble Cappella Mediterranea specifically to rediscover these rarely heard works – though they have expanded their repertoire in the 14 years since then, performing Bach, Handel, Monteverdi and others alongside lesser-known composers.

For his BBC Proms debut, though, Alarcón offers a dialogue between two leading students of Francesco Cavalli: Barbara Strozzi and Antonia Bembo, two women composers who were famous in their time and benefited from the relative compositional freedom that was permitted in Venice.

'Strozzi composed music of sensual emotion,' says Alarcón, 'and Bembo's music has a dramatic sensitivity deriving from a mixture of her French and Italian music inspirations.' Alarcón's Proms programme features excerpts from Bembo's opera *Ercole amante* ('Hercules in Love'), as well as an excerpt from Cavalli's opera on the same subject.