

BELSIZE BAROQUE

Director: Adrian Butterfield

Triumphs and Alliances

Sunday 17 May 2015, 6.30 pm

St Peter's, Belsize Square, Belsize Park, London NW3 4BJ



Programme

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) Sinfonia from the Easter Oratorio, BWV 249

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) Concerto in C major ‘*Per la Solennità di San Lorenzo*’, RV556

Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer (1692–1766) Concerto Armonico No. 5 in F minor

Antonio Vivaldi Concerto for violin and strings in G major, RV298, No. 12 of Op. 4 ‘*La Stravaganza*’

interval

Georg Phillip Telemann (1681–1767) Concerto for two violins and strings in G major, TWV 52:G2

Johann Sebastian Bach Orchestral Suite No. 4 in D major, BWV 1069

Belsize Baroque would like to thank the following for their sponsorship and support, which has made this evening’s concert possible:

- Philip Carne MBE and Christine Carne for their generous support of the orchestra
- Jane Booth and Colin Lawson for lending their baroque clarinets for the concert
- Stephen Keavy for arranging the Guildhall student trumpet players
- Bill Tuck for providing the timpani
- Bridgewood & Neitzert string dealers, repairers and makers
- Matthew Coltman bowmaker

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) Sinfonia from the Easter Oratorio, BWV 249

Bach's music for the Easter Oratorio originated in a pastoral cantata of 1725 commemorating the birthday of Duke Christian of Saxe-Weissenfels. Its transformation into an Oratorio for Easter Sunday in Leipzig during the 1730s is evidence of the close alliance that bonds the sacred and secular in the musical world of this period – for Bach there was no difference in the style or quality of music that celebrated the spiritual and the socio-political hierarchy. Unlike the better known Christmas Oratorio, Bach's Easter Oratorio has no narrator, but four voice parts which represent Simon Peter, the Apostle John, Mary Magdalene and the 'other Mary'. The opening Sinfonia with its three trumpets and timpani is an eloquent manifestation of the triumph of Christ's resurrection.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) Concerto in C major 'Per la Solennità di San Lorenzo', RV556

Largo – Allegro molto – Largo e cantabile – Allegro

This is a superb example of the type of Baroque concerto featuring a number of different instruments, sometimes categorised as '*concerti con molti strumenti*'. Such concerti were especially favoured and cultivated at the court of Augustus the Strong in Dresden, which had a concentration of some of Europe's most gifted instrumentalists. Over the course of his career Vivaldi maintained alliances with the German-speaking world (he died in Vienna), not least by composing a number of works for the Saxon court. This particular concerto, however, was probably written for Vivaldi's native Venice, where the martyr St Lawrence's feast day was commemorated at the Benedictine convent of San Lorenzo on 10 August. It is richly scored for pairs of recorders, oboes and clarinets and a bassoon as well as two concertante violins. The scoring makes for many imaginative and innovative effects; look out in particular for the magical beginning of the slow movement.

Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer (1692–1766) Concerto Armonico No. 5 in F minor

Adagio – Da capella – A tempo comodo – A tempo giusto

Wassenaer was a Dutch nobleman who was a diplomat and international negotiator as well as composer. The negotiating of alliances formed no small part of his public career, which included reorganising the Bailiwick of Utrecht for the Teutonic Order. His Concerti Armonici were published anonymously in 1740. The publication was not originally sanctioned by the composer; a Signor Ricciati had played the first violin part when they were performed in The Hague and prevailed

on Wassenauer to let them be engraved despite the composer's misgivings. Indeed, with exquisitely painful frankness, Wassenauer wrote on the collection's title-page: 'Some of them are tolerable, others middling, others wretched. Had they not been published, I might perhaps have corrected the mistakes in them, but other business left me no leisure to amuse myself with them, and I would have caused their editor offence.' Such modesty on the part of the composer no doubt contributed to the fact that the concerti were long thought to be by others, at one stage passing for the work of Pergolesi. The triumph of detecting the true composer is due to the researches of the Dutch musicologist Alfred Dunning (1980).

Antonio Vivaldi Concerto for violin and strings in G major, RV298, No. 12 of Op. 4 '*La Stravaganza*'

Spiritoso e non Presto – Largo – Allegro

Vivaldi's *La Stravaganza*, written in 1712–1713, promised the listener, through the publisher Estienne Roger of Amsterdam, examples of a performer's skill in containing the unexpected and bizarre ('*stravaganze*') within the established etiquette of the concerto format. It might be useful to know that the opposite of *stravaganza* was '*perfidia*', defined as 'the predilection to do always the same thing, follow the same scheme, maintain the same rhythm'. In these concerti, Vivaldi rises systematically to the challenge of providing the unpredictable in a precisely calculated variety of control and organisation. No 12 contains some of the most imaginative and extended solo passages of the entire set. For instance, listen to how, in the Largo slow movement, Vivaldi develops a spacious chaconne over the typical repeated descending bass line.

Interval

Georg Phillip Telemann (1681–1767) Concerto for two violins and strings in G major, TWV 52:G2

Grave – Allegro – Largo – Presto

Telemann became the musical director of Hamburg's five main churches in 1721, and from that important musical base maintained alliances both musical and personal with Europe's leading musicians. He was godfather to Bach's eldest son Carl Philipp Emanuel, knew Handel and was in contact with France's leading musicians. Telemann's synthesis of the main national musical styles (French, Italian and German) was an important precursor for the music of the early Classical era. This concerto, based on the Corelli Italianate model, demonstrates the sweetness and fluency of Telemann's invention and his invariable understanding of instrumental timbre.

Johann Sebastian Bach Orchestral Suite No. 4 in D major, BWV 1069

Ouverture – Bourrée I – Bourrée II – Gavotte – Menuet I alternativement / Menuet II – Réjouissance

If Bach's Easter Oratorio expressed spiritual triumph, what could provide a more fitting secular triumphant conclusion to the programme than the great German master's suite for three trumpets, three oboes and timpani? The opening Ouverture movement, probably conceived earlier, was adapted by Bach in 1725 for his Christmas Cantata BWV 110 *Unser Mund sei voll Lachens*, 'Our Mouths are full of laughter' (another example of Bach's readiness to tailor the sacred to the secular). The Suite in this version is thought to date from about 1730, one of four Suites written at different times for the Collegium Musicum in Leipzig (an ensemble which had been founded originally by Telemann). A sequence of French dance movements follows the Ouverture; the trumpets and timpani are silent during the two Menuets, which makes their brilliant reappearance in the joyous Réjouissance all the more exultant as a closing number.

Programme notes by Norman MacSween

Photography by Antanas Martinkus

Belsize Baroque

Formed in 2002, Belsize Baroque is one of the leading amateur baroque orchestras. It comprises young professionals, students and committed amateurs. The orchestra performs on period instruments in an historically informed style. It collaborates regularly with leading baroque directors to give orchestral performances as well as working with choral groups.

The orchestra showcases the talents of music college students and young professional musicians, providing these players with the opportunity to perform with top directors, to learn core repertoire and to gain experience in section leading.

Recent fundraising events in which the orchestra has participated include concerts for the Coram Trust, Cancer Research UK and the Dominic Simpson Memorial Trust.

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Visit our website at www.belsizebaroque.org.uk.

Adrian Butterfield is a violinist, director and conductor who specialises in performing music from 1600-1900 on period instruments. He is Musical Director of the Tilford Bach Society and Associate Director of the London Handel Festival and regularly directs the London Handel Orchestra and Players as well as working as a guest soloist and director in Europe and North America.

The London Handel Players perform regularly at the Wigmore Hall and throughout Europe and North America and their Handel recordings have received glowing reviews. The Revolutionary Drawing Room specializes in classical and romantic music on period instruments and has also performed in North America and Europe. A new recording of quartets by Haydn, Mozart, Vanhal and Dittersdorf has been released by RDR to coincide with their 25th anniversary in 2015. Adrian's world premiere complete recordings of Leclair's Books 1 and 2 violin sonatas were released in 2009 and 2013 on Naxos Records.

He works annually with the Southbank Sinfonia, is Professor of Baroque Violin at the Royal College of Music in London, gives masterclasses in Europe and North America and teaches on the Aestas Musica International Summer School of Baroque Music and Dance in Croatia.

Plans for the 2014/15 season include LHP's debut at Carnegie Hall, the Halle Handel Festival in Germany and the York Early Music Festival as well as their return to the Wigmore Hall.



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Sally Heath
Chris Cunningham
Jenny Frost

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Heather Bourne
Val Champion

Cellos

Corrina Connor
Andrew Welsh

Violone

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