



BELSIZE BAROQUE

Director: Matthew Truscott

Gala Concert

Wednesday 4 February 2015, 7.30 pm
49 Queen's Gate Terrace, London SW7 5PN
By kind permission of Sir Vernon and Lady Ellis

Programme

Henry Purcell (1659–1695) from the opera *King Arthur*

Tomaso Albinoni (1671–1751) Concerto in C major Op. 9 no. 9

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767) Concerto in D major TWV 54: D1

interval

Johann Friedric Fasch (1688–1758) Overture in A minor K:a1

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687) Suite from the opera *Armide*

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

Sir Vernon and Lady Ellis for their kindness in hosting our concert

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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.

Belsize Baroque Orchestral Society Ltd is a registered charity (number 1108596) and company (number 5267265).

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

Funds raised from this evening's concert will support the orchestra in providing continuing educational opportunities for all of its performers.

Quotes from players

'Playing regularly with Belsize Baroque Orchestra has been a very valuable experience for me. I've had opportunities to work with some outstanding directors, and I've been able to play some unusual repertoire. Belsize Baroque has enabled me to develop my confidence as a continuo player, through working with instrumental soloists and singers, and I have become a more autonomous, proactive musician because of it. Working on French music was a particular highlight, as this is a specialised and elusive part of the repertoire! Most importantly, I have made contact with other musicians – students and professionals – and so many other exciting chances to play music have arisen from my involvement with the orchestra.'

'Belsize Baroque has provided a great opportunity to play in a period ensemble outside of the normal music-college settings. It has such a welcoming atmosphere, and it's been very educational to meet eminent early-music specialists since joining.'

'Playing with Belsize and being their leader has really helped me gain confidence as a musician. As the leader I have been given the chance to work closely with great directors and the responsibility of leading the orchestra. On occasion I have played a solo in a concerto. The skills I have gained through these experiences are extremely valuable for anyone at the beginning of their musical career and I am grateful for the opportunities I have had. I hope I will be able to continue to use the skills I have gained.'

Henry Purcell (1659–1695) from the opera *King Arthur*

Overture – Air – Chaconne

King Arthur or The British Worthy, to a libretto by John Dryden, was first performed at the Queen's Theatre in 1691. It is a 'semi-opera' in the sense that the principal characters do not sing unless they are pastoral, supernatural (or happen to be drunk). Like the Lully piece that ends the programme tonight, the plot of *King Arthur* is set against the background of religious wars fought in the distant past – in this case between King Arthur's Britons and the Woden-worshipping Saxons (who are ordered after their defeat to return to Germany, since the Britons will '*brook no foreign power to lord it in a land sacred to Freedom*'). Purcell's music for the piece opens with a French-style Overture and ends with a 'Grand Dance', a magnificent Chaconne of the type established by Lully to end his operas. The seer Merlin has conjured up a vision of the ocean surrounding Britain; following a storm, Britannia arises from the waves, with fishermen at her feet. So the mood is staunchly patriotic British, aimed to resonate with the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Even if the musical idiom owes a great deal to the dance rhythms of France, Purcell has imposed his own distinctive stamp so firmly that he has surely convinced us that it is indeed British.

Tomaso Albinoni (1671–1751) Concerto in C major Op. 9 no. 9

Allegro – Adagio – Allegro

As a native of Venice (his father was a wealthy paper manufacturer in the city), Albinoni produced operas that were performed all over Italy. However, it is his instrumental music that is known and has survived: nine collections of concertos were published in his lifetime. From the Opus 9 concertos, published in 1722, number 9 is for two oboes, strings and continuo. The oboe writing is closely interwoven into the orchestral texture, particularly in the central *Adagio* (Albinoni having of course become famous for his *Adagios*).

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767) Concerto in D major

TWV 54: D1

Vivace – Siciliano – Allegro – Gavotte

This concerto by Telemann, the supreme deployer of late Baroque instrumental tone colour both solo and in a huge variety of combinations, features a solo violin and cello with two flutes, supported by strings and continuo. Unusually for a Vivaldian concerto layout, the three movements are supplemented by a

dance movement, as in Bach's first Brandenburg Concerto. While the main concertante writing is for the violin and cello, the flutes and the solo strings intertwine in subtle patterns that would not be out of place in Telemann's *Paris Quartets*. Its *galant* idiom reminds us that the Classical era is not far away.

Interval

Johann Friedric Fasch (1688–1758) Overture in A minor K:a1

Overture – Air – Bourree – Aria – Hornpipe – Menuet

In the second quarter of the eighteenth century there were many highly skilled composers active in the German courts who may not now be household names but who were seriously rated by their contemporaries. One of the best of these was Fasch, who was born near Weimar and spent most of his life as Kapellmeister to the Prince of Anhalt/Zerbst in Saxony. Fasch's suites were performed by Bach at his *Collegium Musicum* concerts in Leipzig. Much of Fasch's music, including that for his many operas, is lost but this delightful Overture and suite of dances survives in manuscript in the Dresden Library, whence we have transcribed it for this evening. Two flutes, two oboes and a bassoon are inventively contrasted with the string textures and show the high value put on wind playing at the German courts of the time.

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687) Suite from the opera *Armide*

Overture – Gavotte – Menuet – Marche – Sarabande – Canaries – Passacaille

Armide was the ultimate collaboration between the massively influential Lully and his favourite librettist Philippe Quinault. First performed in February 1686, it is the earliest of the works being performed tonight. The plot is set against the capture of Jerusalem during the First Crusade in the eleventh century. Armide is a sorceress who falls in love with the crusader Renaud, but this is doomed because instead Renaud chooses Glory and Wisdom (as personified in Lully's patron Louis XIV). Armide is left desolate when her enchanted palace is torn down by demons in the final scene (a spectacular stage device described by a member of the first audience in a wildly overcrowded auditorium as '*the theatre that breaks apart*'). After a sequence of contrasted dance numbers, a powerful chaconne ('*Passacaille*') characterises the sombre mood which prevails at the end of the opera.

Programme notes by Norman MacSween

Photography by Antanas Martinkus



Belsize Baroque

First violins

Magda Loth-Hill
Michael Jenner
Dominika Feher
Katie Stevens

Second violins

Flora Curzon
Judy Taylor
John Bowker
Jenny Frost
Helen France

Violas

Heather Bourne
Jane Macsween
Simon Hill

Cellos

Corrina Connor
Michael Mullen
Andrew Welsh

Violone

Paul Ratcliffe

Baroque guitar

James Bramley

Theorbo

Quentin Miller

Harpichord

Norman MacSween

Flute

Richard Austen
Yu-Wei Hu
Julie Dean (recorder)

Oboes

Susan Cooksley
Nicola Barbagli

Bassoon

Dennis Cook

Belsize Baroque is delighted to be performing with **Matthew Truscott**, one of Europe's leading baroque violinists. He shares his time between period instrument performance and 'modern' chamber music, appearing with some of the finest musicians in both fields. Matthew is one of the leaders of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the large period instrument orchestra resident at London's Southbank Centre. He teaches baroque violin at the Royal Academy of Music in London.



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