

The background of the poster is a Baroque-style painting. It depicts a man with dark, curly hair, wearing a long, light-colored coat with large buttons, breeches, and white stockings. He is standing and playing a transverse flute. To his right is a wooden music stand with sheet music. In the background, there is a window with a grid pattern and a dark wooden cabinet. The lighting is warm and dramatic, typical of Baroque art.

BELSIZE BAROQUE

Catherine Martin,
Director

Summer baroque

Vivaldi
Bach
Locatelli
Telemann

Sunday 23 July 2023, 6.30 pm

St Peter's Church, Belsize Square,
Belsize Park, London, NW3 4HY

www.belsizebaroque.org.uk

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) Concerto for strings in F major, RV 141

Allegro molto – Andante molto – Allegro molto

Vivaldi experimented with every variation of concerto he could think of. His favourite was the solo violin concerto, but he also wrote concerti for a tutti band without a soloist. Vivaldi composed more than 40 of these sparky little nuggets, often called ‘Ripieno Concerti’, that sum up his style in miniature. The machine-like opening violin figure in this concerto that is rapidly handed to the basses is vintage Vivaldi, as is the way the music quickly gives way to an intense harmonic progression underpinning overlapping syncopated violins. The Andante molto unusually imitates a charming French-style minuet, creating a serene and contemplative atmosphere. This is swept away by a tuneful syncopated finale.

Pietro Antonio Locatelli (1695–1764) Concerto Grosso Op. 1 No. 2 in C minor

Adagio – Allegro – Largo – Allegro – Allegro

So brilliant was Locatelli’s playing style that he came to be known as the “Paganini of the eighteenth century”. He apparently never played a wrong note, save on one occasion when in his exuberance he thrust his little finger through the bridge of his violin and was unable to withdraw it. While he was praised by contemporaries, he was castigated by some for his artifice and display. His compositions were, to quote from the time, “rocks famed for a thousand shipwrecks”. Typical for an Italian concerto grosso, a format made popular by Corelli, the concerto grosso performed tonight features a solo quartet of two violins, viola and cello that alternates with the full tutti ensemble over the course of five movements. The key of C minor lends a rather serious tone to the work, but it also adds a rich sonority to the orchestra owing to the timbre of the lower strings that this key tends to emphasise.

Georg Phillip Telemann (1681–1767) Concerto in E minor, TWV 52:e3

Allegro – Adagio – Presto – Adagio – Allegro

Telemann must be one of the most productive composers the world has ever known. With over 3,600 registered works encompassing a variety of styles he became an international star. The piece we are playing tonight, if of doubtful authenticity as a Telemann work (a copy of the work attributing it to Heinichen exists in manuscript), is nevertheless a well-crafted concerto in five movements following the Corelli model. While it appears to be a double concerto, the orchestral strings are richly scored and whoever composed it enjoyed playing with the form across the five movements. The flute here leads the solo sections in the outer movements, with the violin following in counterpoint. The middle Presto movement meanwhile is entirely devoted to a virtuosic violin solo interlude, leading directly into a very short Adagio that acts as a link to the final Allegro.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) Concerto for four violins in E minor from L’Estro Armonico, Op 3 No 4, RV550

Andante – Allegro assai – Adagio – Allegro

The publication of Vivaldi’s Opus 3 concerti as L’Estro Armonico (‘musical imagination/ genius’) in 1711 gave the ‘Red Priest’ instant fame all over Europe. This was due in large part, as well as to Vivaldi’s musical invention and innovation, to the superb engraving and printing techniques of Estienne Roger’s publishing house in Amsterdam and to Roger’s aggressive publicity campaigns for the composers he promoted. Vivaldi, in his dedicatory preface to the set of concerti, paid tribute to this by praising ‘la famosa mano di Monsieur Roger’ (‘Mr Roger’s celebrated hand’) and heaping scorn on the poor quality of Italian printers. The L’Estro Armonico concertos are written for the Roman type of concerto with four violin parts, whereas the Venetian taste was

to pit one or two soloists against only two orchestral violin parts (as happens in nearly all other Vivaldi concertos). You can hear Vivaldi pushing the form to its limits and cramming it with experiments in Opus 3. We have chosen to perform this work with just one player on each part, as was probably Vivaldi's intention. We hope you will enjoy the way Vivaldi makes use of the four violins both as individual soloists and together as the 'tutti' band.

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 he 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. Bach himself owned a copy of this work and may have performed it at his Collegium Musicum concerts in Leipzig.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) Orchestral Suite No.2 in B minor, BWV 1067

Ouverture – Rondeau – Sarabande – Bourrées 1 & 2 – Polonaise & Double – Menuet – Badinerie

Christoph Wolff and Walter Emery wrote that Bach's 'genius combined outstanding performing musicianship with supreme creative powers, in which forceful and original inventiveness, technical mastery, and intellectual control are perfectly balanced.' Such laudatory terms were used about Bach from the late 18th century onwards. Nicholas Forkel, Bach's first biographer, wrote that 'Bach cannot be named except in tones of rapture, and even of devout awe, by those who have learnt to know him' in 1802. There has been some doubt over whether Bach's instrumental music dates from his years in Cöthen (1717–23), but the current musicological position is that most of it was written for the Leipzig Collegium Music, with the four orchestral suites being composed between 1725 and 1739.

The handwriting and paper used for the orchestral parts of this work date them specifically to 1738–39, which coincides with Bach's resumption of directorship of the Collegium Musicum concerts in October 1739 after a two-year hiatus. There is some consensus that this was the last orchestral work Bach composed.

Of the four suites this is by far the darkest; all seven movements are packed with awkward melodic leaps and melancholic sighing figures. It is also the most French-sounding, with a notable elegance, grace, and rhythmic vitality associated with the French courtly dances of the time. It opens with a grand, French-style overture whose stately, dotted-rhythmic-patterned outer sections frame a brisk, syncopated middle section that gives the solo flute extended passages of virtuosity. Of the six dances that follow, the most striking are the Polonaise and Badinerie. Both are forms that Telemann used frequently but Bach used very sparingly. In each, the flute is given exposed and (in the latter) debonair solos. In contrast, the Sarabande focuses on beautiful discordant appoggiaturas in the melody, whilst also delighting the attentive listener with a strict canon between the top and bottom parts (the bass line follows the melody line one bar later). The result is a masterful blend of French influence and Bach's unparalleled artistry, creating a work that epitomizes the universal appeal of his music.

Programme notes by Richard Austen

Design/layout by Andrew Welsh

Andrew Taheny, Belsize Baroque's 2022–23 Leader Scholar



Andrew writes:

My scholarship year with Belsize Baroque has provided me with invaluable opportunities to build leadership experience with a period instrument ensemble. I have performed in principal positions in four concerts, leading the orchestra at Southwark Cathedral for Bach's B Minor Mass and at the London Handel Festival under Laurence Cummings. In January I programmed a concert of 18th-century Scottish music, and this summer I will perform a Telemann Double Violin Concerto with the ensemble's Director, Catherine Martin. Having lessons with Catherine over the year has also been a wonderful way to help me develop many aspects of my playing. I have found her to be a very supportive and inspiring person to work with, assisting and challenging me in equal measure. From my first rehearsal, the whole orchestra made me feel very welcome, and I have loved working with a group who are so passionate about baroque music! I cannot recommend the scholarship programme highly enough to young baroque violinists like myself who are getting started in the profession.

Belsize Baroque would like to thank the churchwardens of St Peter's for their assistance. We would also like to thank Richard Link and The Rofeh Trust for their generous donations in support of the orchestra and the Leader Scholarship in particular.



Catherine Martin, Belsize Baroque's current musical director, read music at St Anne's College, Oxford, completing her postgraduate studies with David Takeno at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, on the Advanced Solo Studies course.

During this time, she became interested in historical performance, playing the baroque violin alongside her modern violin studies. Catherine spent twelve years as a member of The English Concert under the direction of Trevor Pinnock, before leaving in 2005 to take up the post of leader of the Gabrieli Consort and Players. In 2010 Catherine was also appointed concertmaster of Die Kölner Akademie in Germany. She has been the leader of the orchestra of the Early Opera Company since its inception in 1994.

Catherine has been directing Belsize Baroque and performing with us since 2016. In addition, she leads regular workshops with us that focus on particular technical issues and give us an opportunity to work on a variety of repertoire.

In 2003, Catherine joined the Salomon String Quartet as second violin to Simon Standage, with whom she also plays trio sonatas in Collegium Musicum 90.

Catherine appears on many recordings; for Deutsche Grammophon and Winged Lion with The Gabrieli Consort and Players, EMI with Ensemble Galant, and Chandos with I Fagiolini. She teaches historical violin at the Royal College of Music in London. Catherine has a particular interest in Norwegian folk music, playing the hardanger fiddle.

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Belsize Baroque

The orchestra comprises music professionals, music students and amateur players. Our amateur musicians come from many different walks of life, and our players in general come from all over the world. Many musicians who joined us as students over the years have gone on to successful careers in top orchestras. Since 2016 the generosity of supporters has in addition made our formal scholarship programme possible.

Over the past two decades, we have been privileged to work with renowned directors and many talented musicians. We have performed many large-scale works with numerous choirs, and have given performances in aid of charities, as well as working with the Handel House and the London Handel Festival. Our first concert at St Peter's was on 22 June 2013, since when we have been orchestra in residence at the church, enjoying the support of its staff and the local community.

Belsize Baroque Orchestral Society Ltd is a registered charity (number 1108596) and company (number 5267265). The orchestra can be hired for orchestral or choral concerts and other events, and is delighted to assist other charities. www.belsizebaroque.org.uk; Twitter: @Belsize_Baroque

Save the date! Belsize Baroque's next scheduled concert is on Sunday 24 September 2023, at St Peter's, Belsize Park, directed by Kati Debretzeni. We will also be performing part of Bach's Christmas Oratorio with Amici e Voci choir on Sunday 10 December 2023 at St Peter's, Belsize Park, directed by Nick Hardisty. Details will be available soon at www.belsizebaroque.org.uk.



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Sheku Kanneh-Mason MBE plays on a cello by Matteo Goffriller, Venice c1700, the 'Ex-Goritzki', made possible by the Florian Leonhard Fellowship, and an exceptionally fine bow by Nicolas Maire c1855, lent by a private sponsor.



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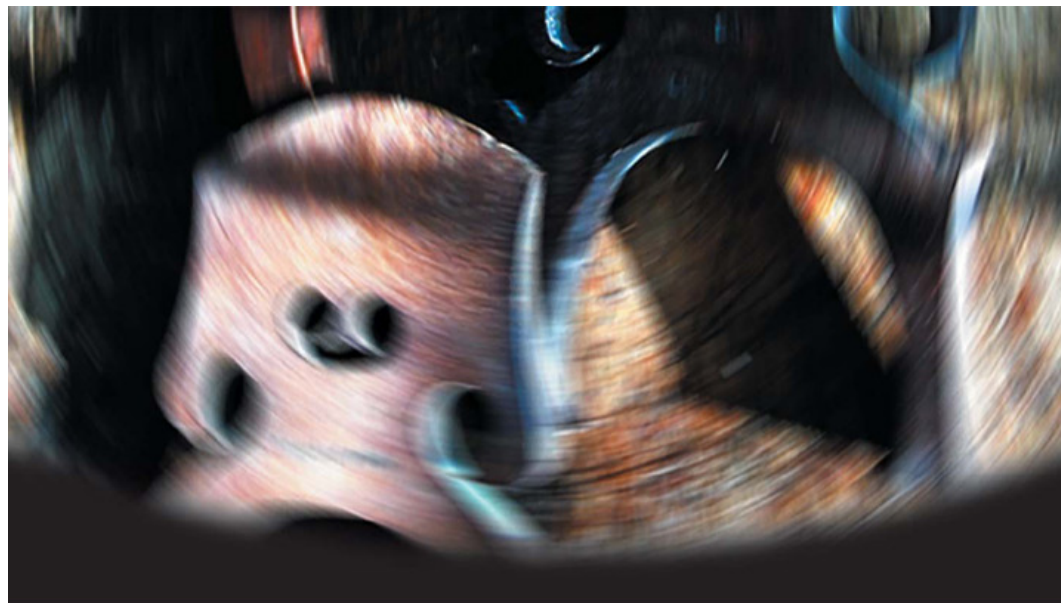
Harp

Jane Bliss

Flute

Richard Austen

Putting on performances, running workshops, and maintaining our scholarships all require funds. Concerts alone cannot cover the costs of these and we receive no regular external funding. All of the administration is carried out by unpaid volunteers. We hope that tonight's concert will inspire you to donate to the orchestra, which you can do very easily via the link below. Thank you for your generosity.
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