

BELSIZE BAROQUE

Catherine Martin,
Director

A new era

Richter
WF Bach
JC Bach
Boyce
Stamitz



Sunday
28 January 2024
6.30 pm

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

www.belsizebaroque.org.uk

A new era

The mid-18th century witnessed a musical revolution as composers explored new avenues in instrumental composition, ushering in the era of the symphony. The *galant* style, originating in opera, found its way into instrumental music, finding its perfect canvas in the Italian opera overture or *sinfonia*. Tonight's program unveils a selection of symphonic works from this transformative period, showcasing the brilliance and diversity of composers whose experiments contributed to the evolution of classical music.

Franz Xavier Richter (1709–1789): Symphony No. 29 in G minor

Adagio – Fuga – Andante – Presto

Our journey commences with the oldest and most conservative composer of the Mannheim school and his Symphony No. 29, a composition exuding a Baroque aesthetic. Indeed, he seems to have found the most characteristic musical devices of Mannheim symphonies – the famous “Mannheim skyrocket”, the “Mannheim crescendo” and so on – thoroughly distasteful. His disdain is evident here, as he weaves intricate Baroque harmonic sequences and quirky harmonic clashes into this intense and dramatic work. The symphony appears in a few versions with different instrumentation and movements. This long version includes wind parts that he may have added later. The opening Adagio & Fuga has a structure that is very similar to that of the WF Bach *sinfonia* we will play next. Richter makes the most of the orchestra by increasing the number of stopped notes (where the strings play multiple notes at once) and adding the winds during extended climactic passages. The fugue is followed by an elegant slow movement, before we return to darker colours in the final presto.

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710–1784): Sinfonia in D minor, F. 65

Adagio – Fuga

Wilhelm Friedemann, the eldest son of Johann Sebastian, was a pioneering yet underrated figure. This is despite the fact that Johann Sebastian himself seems to have regarded his eldest son as the most talented of his children. Ironically, Wilhelm met essentially the same fate as his father; both were regarded in their own day as fusty eccentrics, with neither ever managing to find a post worthy of their talent. Wilhelm's avant-garde musical language, showcased in this two-movement *Sinfonia* in D minor, reveals a bold harmonic terrain. Likely used as the opening for a vocal work, the *sinfonia*'s haunting Mozartian adagio seamlessly transitions into a dark and intricate fugue, underscoring Wilhelm's unique contribution to the Baroque *sinfonia*.

Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782): Symphony in E flat, Opus 3 No. 3

Allegro di molto – Andantino – Allegro

Johann Christian, the youngest son of Johann Sebastian, studied first with his father and, after his father's death, with his brother Carl Philipp Emanuel. Whilst in Italy, Johann Christian developed a reputation for his liturgical music and operas, and he became a skilled composer of the Italian opera overture, one of the forms that developed into the Classical symphony. In 1762 he moved to London, where he became the queen's music master, a popular composer of operas and instrumental works, and one of the presenters, along with Carl Abel, of an important public concert series in Soho. He is often referred to as “the London Bach.” His Opus 3 symphonies, premiered in 1765, influenced even the young Mozart during his London tour.

William Boyce (1711–1779): Symphony in C major Opus 2 No. 3

Allegro – Vivace – Menuetto

Here we present a symphony that stands out as somewhat antiquated for its time. Nevertheless, William Boyce achieved considerable success, and his Opus 2 collection of symphonies, published in 1760, continues to hold a prominent place in concert repertoires. Most of these symphonies were composed late in his life as overtures to various stage works at the Drury Lane Theatre, shortly before blindness forced him to retire from composition. Contemporaries such as Johann Stamitz and JC Bach built their innovations on this type of symphony. Despite its old-fashioned nature, Boyce's symphony exudes a lively and invigorating quality. The emphasis on straightforward, pristine melodies, a hallmark of English compositions, likely contributed to the enduring popularity of these works.

Johann Stamitz (1717–1757): Symphony in D (from 6 symphonies, 1759)

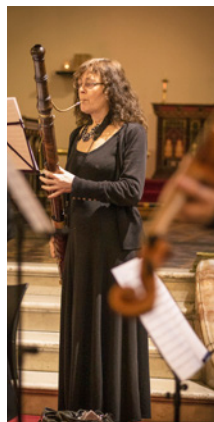
Presto – Andantino – Menuetto & Trio – Prestissimo

Our musical journey culminates with Johann Stamitz, an unsung hero whose influence reverberated through generations, touching the likes of Mozart and Haydn. Stamitz received early musical education from his father and appeared as a violinist in Frankfurt in 1742. He had apparently by then been engaged as a chamber musician to Prince Karl Theodor (Elector Palatine after 1743), after the coronation of the emperor Charles VII in Prague. In 1745 he was appointed concertmaster of the court orchestra at Mannheim, where he cultivated new orchestral effects developed by the court composers, taking Europe by storm and heralding a new era. The first movement of this symphony makes use of the famous “Mannheim crescendo”, essentially a controlled crescendo intensified by an increase in both pitch and the number of players, which would become a familiar feature of Classical symphonies. This symphony, characterized by sudden dynamic shifts and playful motifs, encapsulates the exuberance and ground-breaking spirit of Stamitz, a pivotal figure in the evolution of the symphony.

Programme notes by Richard Austen

Design/layout by Andrew Welsh





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

APERIVINO

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12 Belsize Terrace
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Open for wine, cocktails and
food after tonight's concert

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

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.
www.justgiving.com/campaign/belsizebaroque



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.



THE OLD MASTERS IN NEW HANDS

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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Miranda Ford
Val Hudson
Jenny Frost

Violas

Elizabeth Hart
Roger Mears
Alistair Scahill

Cellos

David Winfield
Paul Woodmansterne
Henry Coggill

Double bass

Jude Chandler

Harpsichord

Michael Strange

Oboes

Susan Cooksley
Craig White

Bassoon

Hillary Ougham

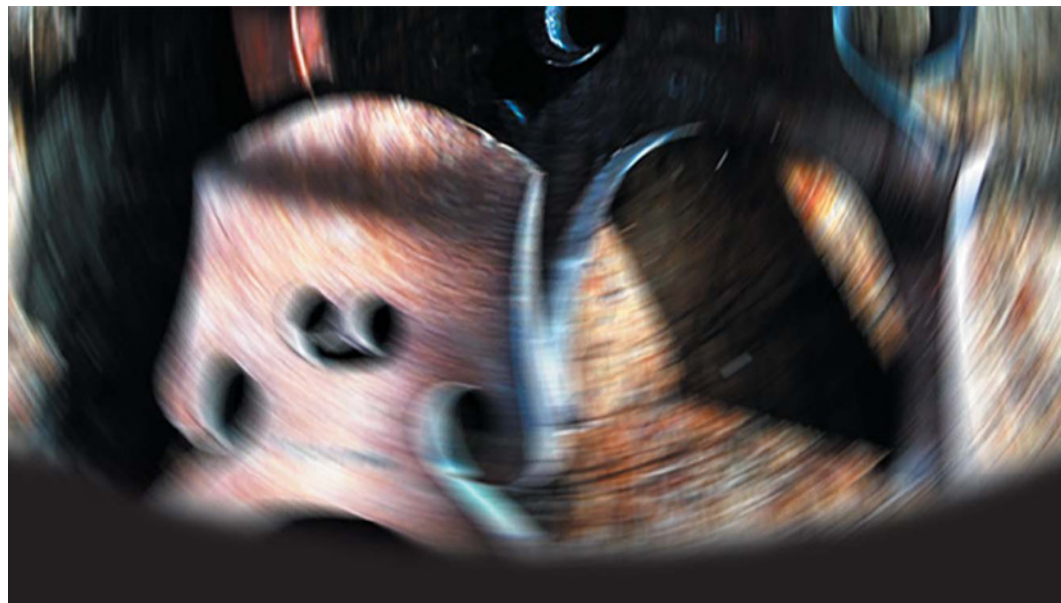
Flutes

Richard Austen
Naomi Anderson

Horns

Ori Langer
Henry Ward

Save the date! Our next performance will be as part of the London Handel Festival on Saturday 16 March, at the Grosvenor Chapel, Mayfair. We also have a concert scheduled for Sunday 9 June at St Peter's, Belsize Park, to be directed by Catherine Martin. Details will be available soon at www.belsizebaroque.org.uk.



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