

# BELSIZE BAROQUE



Catherine Martin  
*Director*

**From Naples  
to Rome**

**Albinoni  
Durante  
Pergolesi  
Sarro  
Vinci**

Sunday 11 May 2025, 6.30 pm

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

[www.belsizebaroque.org.uk](http://www.belsizebaroque.org.uk)

## From Naples to Rome

Tonight's concert traverses the soundscapes of Baroque Italy, opening with the grandeur of Rome – epitomised by Albinoni's clean lines and bubbling wind writing – before venturing south to Naples, where Domenico Sarro, Giovanni Pergolesi and Francesco Durante were pioneers in the emerging *galante* style which features elegant melodies and light textures. The programme culminates in the *sinfonia* from Leonardo Vinci's *Artaserse*, a Neapolitan opera premiered in Rome that became a sensation, leaving its mark on generations of composers.

### **Tomaso Albinoni (1671–1751): Sinfonia to *La Statira***

*(Allegro) – Andante – (Allegro)*

Though Venetian by birth, Albinoni composed *La Statira* for Rome's Teatro Capranica during the 1726 Carnival season. Structured in the classic Italian fast-slow-fast form, this *sinfonia* showcases his graceful melodic lines and harmonic clarity, setting the stage for the opera's drama. While lacking a singular memorable theme, the opening movement brims with a buoyant energy, punctuated by soloistic oboe and trumpet passages – a hallmark of Roman orchestration. The central *Andante* offers a moment of melancholy repose before the finale's jubilant dance. This *sinfonia* exemplifies the Roman sound, providing a perfect foil for the Neapolitan works to follow.

### **Francesco Durante (1684–1755): Concerto No. 3 in E flat**

*Presto – Largo staccato / Canone amabile / Largo / Amabile – Allegro – Minuetto – Allegro assai – Finale*

Durante, a Neapolitan trained in Rome, distilled both cities' traditions into his unpublished set of concerti. Probably written in the 1730s, Concerto No. 3 is distinctive with its bewildering series of connecting movements, the kind of thing you would be more likely to hear in an opera. The *Canone amabile* unfolds as a lyrical canon between the viola and bass, later blossoming into an intricate double canon – a testament to Durante's "learned style", which was admired even by Mozart. Roman in structure yet Neapolitan in lyricism, its appeal is both intellectual and emotional.

### **Domenico Sarro (1679–1744): Sinfonia to *Arsace***

*Vivace assai – Staccato – (Allegro)*

Sarro's *Arsace* transports us to Naples in 1718, when opera was a civic obsession. The brisk three-movement (fast-slow-fast) work sparkles with relentless energy, its opening *Vivace assai* propelled by a clear statement of intent from tremolo violins. The music is a burst of Vivaldian syncopations and rich harmony that come to an abrupt halt, making way for a tentative dotted-rhythm interlude. A spirited dance closes the work, epitomising Naples' gift for blending melody with theatrical urgency.

### **Tomaso Albinoni (1671–1751): Concerto for two oboes Op. 9 No. 9**

*Allegro – Adagio – Allegro*

As we noted earlier, 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, No. 9 is for two oboes, strings and continuo. Albinoni cultivated his own distinctive concerto style; his preference was to have the oboes interwoven with the strings to create a mosaic of colourful textures with sections loosely linked together. The opening *sinfonia* we heard earlier is in the same style. Both works share the bright key of C major, giving them an effervescent quality. However, it is the *Adagio* that is particularly effective in its orchestration (Albinoni having of course become famous for his *adagios*).

## Giovanni Pergolesi (1710–1736): Violin Concerto in B flat

*Allegro – Largo – Allegro*

Pergolesi's sacred works soared in popularity after his untimely death from tuberculosis at the age of just 26, leading to a wave of misattributed compositions. Among these is his well-known Magnificat, now believed to have been composed by Francesco Durante. His violin concerto in B flat, likely written during his brief yet dazzling career in Naples, exemplifies the city's flair for instrumental virtuosity. The solo violin part demands both technical brilliance and expressive depth, setting it apart from the vast number of Italian violin concertos of the 1730s. Infused with the rococo elegance and melodic charm that define Neapolitan music, the piece shines with effortless grace. Tonight, our 2024/25 Belsize Scholar Sofia Mücke leads the orchestra from the violin.

## Leonardo Vinci (c. 1690–1730), Sinfonia to *Artaserse* (1730)

*Allegro – Grave – Minuetto*

We return to Rome with the jubilant sound of trumpets and drums to close our concert. Vinci was a Naples-born composer who became famous for his operas in Italy. *Artaserse* was considered at the time as the Neapolitan pinnacle of his opera output, and premiered at the Teatro delle Dame in Rome in 1730. Almost entirely forgotten, this is the last of nineteen operas Vinci composed between 1722 and 1730 before his career was cut short by poison. Like the composer, this elegant work met a premature end when Pope Benedict XIII died two weeks into its first run, an event that prompted the closure of the Roman theatres. Its star castrato Carestini intoned a particularly indignant 'lasciatemi' when the performance was rudely interrupted by the breaking news, as one apocryphal anecdote has it. In spite of this misfortune, *Artaserse* proved a (posthumous) triumph for Vinci, inspiring one contemporary critic to hail the opera as one of those rare works that "harrow the soul and prompt us to shed tears of pity and horror". Despite all of this drama, we chose this sinfonia as it remains a joyful romp of Italian writing that marries the *galante* melodies of Naples with the wind writing of the Roman orchestras.

Programme notes by Richard Austen  
Design/layout by Andrew Welsh



Photo by John Watson





**Catherine Martin** 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 was invited by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in 2012 to coach the players on baroque and classical repertoire. She also runs

weekend workshops and concert performances with many amateur baroque orchestras and modern chamber orchestras who wish to know more about the field of historical performance. Catherine has a particular interest in Norwegian folk music, playing the hardanger fiddle.

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.

#### **Our 2024–25 Leader Scholar – Sophia Mücke**

Belsize Baroque is delighted to announce that our scholar for 2024–25 will be **Sophia Mücke**. Sophia has just completed her BA at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, and is starting her masters at the Royal Academy of Music in London this autumn, studying with Pavlo Beznosiuk and Nicolette Moonen. She has performed with Zürcher Barockorchester, La Chapelle Ancienne, Musica Basiliensis, among others. In 2023 she participated in an internship programme with Concentus Musicus Wien in Melk and in 2024–25 she will be part of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment experience programme. In 2024 she was awarded the Friedl Wald Stiftung scholarship.



Sophia writes: *I am happy, proud and grateful to be given the opportunity to work with you for the season 24/25. It is a fantastic chance for me to dive into the active music scene in London from the very beginning of my stay. I am excited to meet you, and curious to learn from you, to share, to discover, to create and to experience many wonderful musical adventures together! The exchange with fellow musicians, the dialogue during rehearsals and performances, and the magical power that arises when many people make music together, always give me new energy and fill me with deep gratitude. I am very much looking forward to sharing these experiences with you soon.*

#### **2024–25 Leadership Bursary – Sara Matović**

Belsize Baroque has also awarded a bursary to **Sara Matović**, who is currently studying with Adrian Butterfield for her masters at the Royal College of Music, London. Sara completed her undergraduate studies at Belgrade Baroque Academy, and has performed in Belgrade with the Belgrade Baroque Academy, in Salzburg with The Mozarteum Baroque Orchestra, and in London with the Royal College of Music Baroque Orchestra.



Sara writes: *I am honoured to be a part of the Belsize Baroque Orchestra and thrilled to receive this bursary. Being involved with this esteemed ensemble allows me to deepen my passion for baroque music and connect with fellow musicians. I look forward to contributing to and learning from this vibrant musical community.*

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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](http://www.belsizebaroque.org.uk); Twitter: @Belsize\_Baroque



Belsize Baroque would like to thank the 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.

## **First violins**

Catherine Martin  
Sophia Mücke  
Christine-Marié Louw  
Val Hudson  
Michael Jenner  
Tamsin Ireland

## **Second violins**

Nick Hardisty  
Graham Nicholson  
Anthony Constantine  
Carsten Maass  
Jenny Frost

## **Violas**

Elizabeth Hart  
Roger Mears  
John Sutherland

## **Cellos**

David Winfield  
Miranda Ford  
Theo Tinkler

## **Double bass**

Peter McCarthy

## **Harpsichord**

Michael Strange

## **Theorbo**

Quentin Miller

## **Harp**

Jane Bliss

## **Oboes**

Susan Cooksley  
Craig White

## **Trumpets**

Sebastian Carpenter  
Jessica Malone

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. Thank you for your generosity. [www.justgiving.com/campaign/belsizebaroque](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/belsizebaroque)





# 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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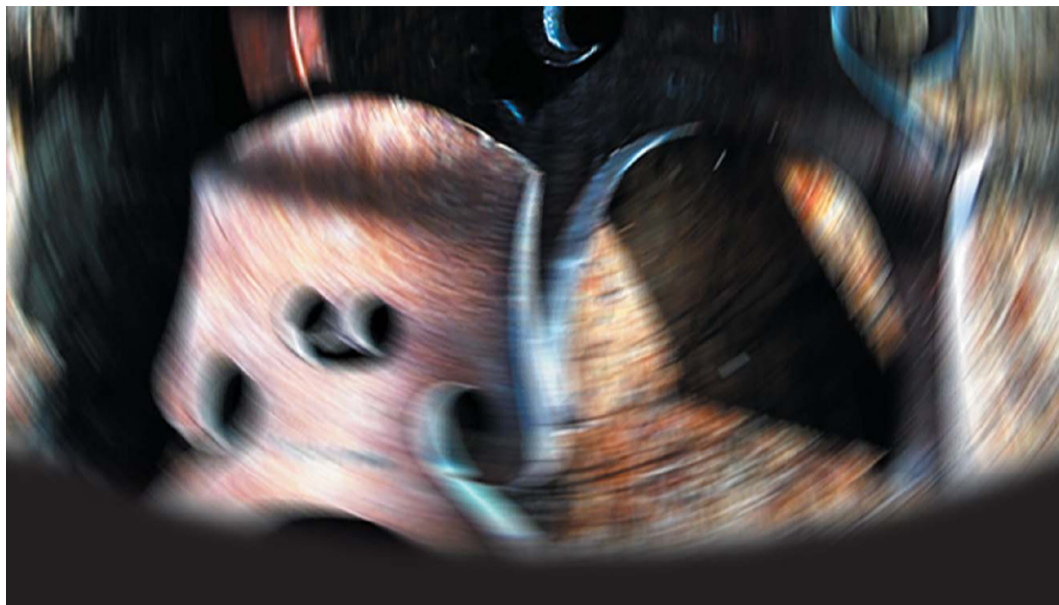
**Save the date!** Our next concert will be on Saturday 14 June, with the choir of the Royal Free Music Society. We will also be giving concerts on Sunday 6 July and Sunday 21 September at St Peter's, Belsize Park, directed by Catherine Martin. Details will be available soon at [www.belsizebaroque.org.uk](http://www.belsizebaroque.org.uk).



Photo by John Watson



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