

# BELSIZE BAROQUE



Catherine Martin  
*Director*

## Baroque Masters

Corelli  
Telemann  
Geminiani  
Bach

Sunday 18 January  
2026, 6.30 pm

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

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

## A tour of Baroque Europe – familiar music, fresh perspectives

This programme brings together four contrasting works from the Baroque period, each representing a different musical centre and sound world. Rather than presenting these pieces as fixed museum objects, the programme explores them as living music, shaped by performance choices that reflect historical practices of the time.

Baroque composers and performers expected music to be adapted to circumstances – available players, venue, and occasion all played a role. In that spirit, familiar repertoire is heard in less familiar guises. Corelli's concerto is enriched with added winds reinforcing the string parts, following common early eighteenth-century practice, while Bach's celebrated third suite is performed without trumpets, revealing a lighter sonority. Alongside these works sit Telemann's colourful orchestral writing and Geminiani's striking use of the bassoon as a solo voice.

We invite you to listen for both familiarity and surprise: well-known Baroque names appear alongside less familiar works, and a couple are heard in versions that challenge the modern expectation to preserve a definitive artwork. Notice how changes of instrumentation and texture alter colour and character, revealing how flexible and imaginative Baroque performance could be.

### Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713): Concerto Grosso in D major, Op. 6 No. 4

*Adagio – Allegro – Adagio – Vivace – Allegro – Allegro*

Arcangelo Corelli was one of the most influential composers of the late seventeenth century, admired throughout Europe for music that exemplified balance, clarity, and expressive control. His concerti grossi became models for generations of composers, shaping orchestral writing well into the eighteenth century. The key to these early concerti is that they are built around the idea of contrast between a small group of players (the *concertino*) and a large group (the *ripieno*). The *concertino* players (usually two violins and a cello) were not soloists in the modern sense, but simply single players there to create interest as the music shifts between these two groups.

The twelve concerti of Op. 6 were published in 1714, after Corelli's death, but represent music he had refined over many years in Rome. No. 4 follows the “*sonata da chiesa*” (church sonata) pattern, alternating between slow and fast movements. The opening *Adagio* unfolds with a dignified, almost architectural calm, built from expressive suspensions. The following *Allegro* introduces lively imitative writing, as musical ideas pass between the *concertino* and the full ensemble.

In our performance, wind instruments reinforce the *ripieno* string parts – a historically common solution in large churches and palaces. Rather than standing out as soloists, the winds enrich the texture and add weight and colour to the larger *ripieno* group, reminding us that Corelli's music was often more sonorous and flexible in practice than modern string-only performances might suggest. This Italian practice of dividing an orchestra persisted across Europe for decades. Even in the 1740s many court orchestras still designated their musicians as *concertino* or *ripieno* players (the equivalent of the principal and non-principal players today).

### Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767): Overture in A minor, TWV 55:4

*Ouverture – Passepied – Bourrée – Menuet – Gavotte – Polonaise – Gigue*

Telemann was one of the most widely admired composers of his day, renowned for his ability to blend national styles into an unmistakably personal voice. His *ouvertures* (now often called orchestral suites) combine the grandeur of French ceremonial music with lighter dance movements of varied character. His career spanned many decades and he was still composing in his 70s, during the early Classical era. He saw many shifts in musical trends (not all to his liking, judging by his criticisms of Mannheim symphonies) but in his final biography he admitted that he had composed so much music that he could not remember it all. And this makes sense, as while there are well over 1,000 works that we know of today, he probably wrote closer to 2,000. He certainly wrote hundreds of orchestral suites, of which this is just one.

The opening movement (*ouverture*) follows the classic French model, beginning with stately dotted rhythms before launching into a lively, fugal section. What makes this work particularly distinctive is its scoring: oboes and recorders are used not just for contrast but also for expressive colour. The softer, pastoral sound of the recorders is often set as an extra voice high up over the rest of the orchestra against the brighter, more penetrating oboes.

In the subsequent dance movements, Telemann plays with expectation. Elegant courtly gestures sit alongside more rustic rhythms, and short movements pass quickly from seriousness to humour. This constant change of mood keeps the listener alert and reflects Telemann's gift for making sophisticated music sound spontaneous and approachable. Listen out for the polonaise movement, which in fact contains two versions of a polonaise – one in duple time followed by the more common triple time version.

## **Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762): Concerto Grosso in B-flat major, Op. 7 No. 6**

*Allegro moderato – Adagio – Andante – Andante – Adagio – Presto – Affettuoso – Adagio – Allegro moderato – Andante – Adagio – Allegro assai/Adagio – Presto*

Francesco Geminiani, a pupil of Corelli, carried Italian musical traditions across Europe during a career that took him to London and Dublin. While grounded in Corelli's style, Geminiani often sought stronger emotional contrasts and more adventurous harmony.

You might feel extremely daunted by the list of movement names above, but rest assured that most of these movements are short, serving to create a large mosaic of musical ideas. This is a pattern that Geminiani developed over time, taking Corelli's ideas of contrast and extending them even further over a much larger structure. We have even more contrasting sections, with a variety of keys (including the horrifying and extremely rare B flat minor) and sound palettes. The *concertino* consists of two violins, a viola and a cello, with the bassoon moonlighting as both a *concertino* and a *ripieno* player. Opus 7 was one of Geminiani's last published works and is rarely heard or recorded today. The reaction from musicians when encountering his Opus 7 is usually surprise and confusion because the music is rooted in a much earlier decade but has an expressive power that is more subtle and contemporary, the music rapidly shifting from one style to another. This state of inner contradiction was probably not always understood by Geminiani's contemporaries, but it is exactly what we look for and admire nowadays. The use of bassoon in this last concerto of the set is unusual as it normally only appears with other winds or as the sole soloist in a dedicated concerto. Rather than merely reinforcing the bass line, the instrument emerges as a lyrical and virtuosic voice. In the slower movements, the bassoon sings expressively, its warm tone blending with the strings; in faster sections, it becomes agile and dramatic, engaging in lively dialogue with the ensemble.

By spotlighting an instrument usually kept in the background, Geminiani offers an unexpected perspective on the concerto grosso, expanding its expressive range and adding a distinctive colour to the programme.

## **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750): Overture (Suite) No. 3 in D major, BWV 1068**

*Ouverture – Air – Gavotte 1 & 2 – Bourrée – Gigue*

Bach's orchestral suites reflect his fascination with French musical forms, as well as his unmatched skill in counterpoint. The art of counterpoint, also known as contrapuntal technique, involves combining musical voices using one or more melodies and was taught to future musicians at a young age, some of whom would continue to develop it as a craft. The fast section of Telemann's overture was an example of this skill in action. The opening of this suite by Bach is grand and ceremonial, with dotted rhythms framing a similarly vigorous central section of interweaving lines. While the following air is often considered the crowning feature of this suite, the overture



is undoubtedly one of Bach's most energetic and fun pieces of music. He effortlessly combines complex Germanic formal counterpoint with Italian relentless energy. This results in music that on the one hand is extremely dense and complicated, but on the other is also accessible because of its catchy rhythms and energy.

The dances that follow reveal a wide expressive range. The *Air* – one of Bach's most famous movements – unfolds with serene simplicity, its long melodic line floating above a gently pulsing bass accompaniment. This is another example of Bach's skill in counterpoint; the two violin lines and the viola have completely independent melodies that could each be played alone satisfactorily without the other parts. The magic happens when all three are played simultaneously, transforming the music into something more than the sum of its parts, yet it all sounds effortless. As the only real slow movement it stands out all the more. The paired *Gavottes* contrast elegance with earthier energy, while the concluding *Bourrée* and *Gigue* bring rhythmic drive and exuberance.

In this performance, the suite is heard without trumpets. Some scholars (in particular Joshua Rifkin, who convincingly shows how the source material betrays the original instrumentation) believe these were later additions for a festive occasion, and their absence here creates a more intimate, transparent sound. Heard this way, we hope to offer a fresh perspective on one of Bach's most familiar orchestral works, bringing the programme to a joyful close.

Programme notes by Richard Austen  
Design/layout by Andrew Welsh

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)



**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.

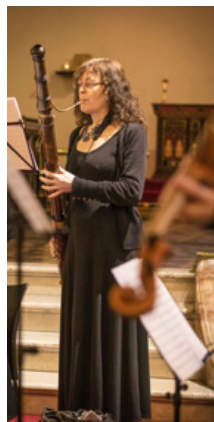


Photo by John Watson



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



Photo by John Watson

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.

## First violins

Catherine Martin  
Michael Jenner  
Christine-Marié Louw  
Rachel Ambrose Evans  
Tamsin Ireland  
Jenny Frost

## Second violins

Nick Hardisty  
Miranda Ford  
Val Hudson  
Maria di Bella  
Carsten Maas

## Violas

Elizabeth Hart  
Roger Mears  
Deborah Miles-Johnson  
Madison Marshall

## Cellos

David Winfield  
Mary Walton  
Marco Russo

## Violone

Magdalena Theurl

## Harpsichord

Mihails Pranovics

## Theorbo

Quentin Miller

## Oboes

Susan Cooksley  
Craig White

## Bassoon

Hilary Ougham

## Flutes/recorders

Richard Austen  
Nikki Wilkinson





# 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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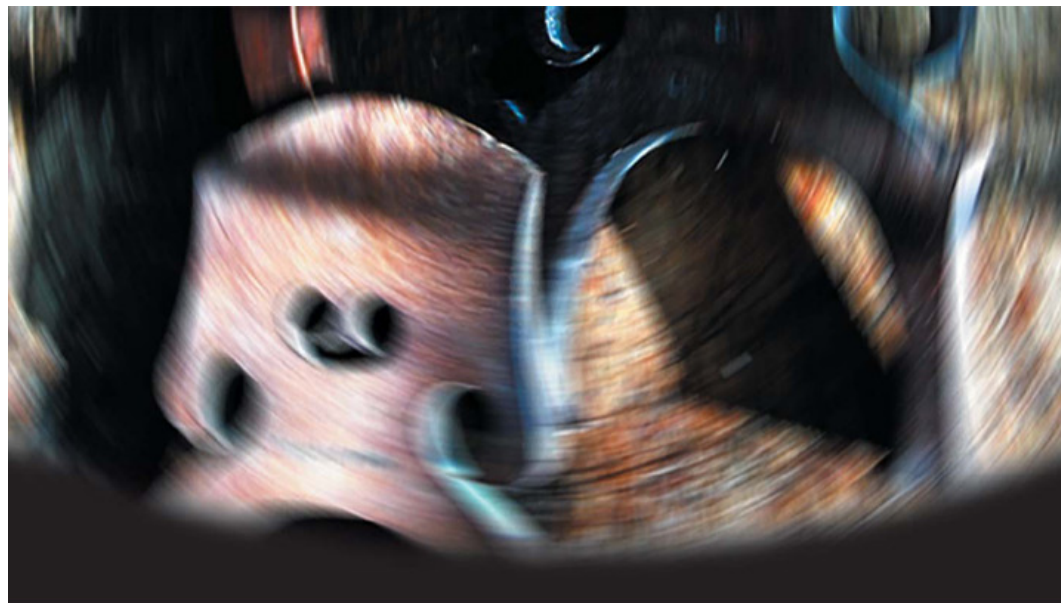
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[violins@florianleonhard.com](mailto:violins@florianleonhard.com) | [www.florianleonhard.com](http://www.florianleonhard.com)

**Save the date!** Our next concerts will be on Sunday 10 May, Sunday 20 June, Sunday 5 July, and Sunday 13 September at St Peter's, Belsize Park. Details will be available soon at [www.belsizebaroque.org.uk](http://www.belsizebaroque.org.uk).



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