

# BELSIZE BAROQUE



Catherine Martin  
*Director*

**Bohemia  
and Poland**

**Telemann**

**Fasch**

**Molter**

**Schurer**

**Tůma**

Sunday 6 July 2025, 6.30 pm

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

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

## Bohemia and Poland

When we think of Baroque music, our minds often go straight to the golden triangle of France, Italy, and Germany. Yet beyond this familiar landscape lies a wealth of musical activity that flourished in neighbouring regions such as Bohemia and Poland—areas that not only produced distinctive composers but also inspired musicians working in the major courts of the Holy Roman Empire. Tonight's programme explores this cultural cross-pollination with music written for or influenced by the great German court orchestras, particularly those in Dresden and Vienna, but with stylistic roots reaching into Central and Eastern Europe.

One notable musical export from Poland was the Polonaise, a stately dance in triple time that became highly fashionable in Dresden during the 18th century. Its rhythmic swagger, melodic quirks, and folk-like textures lent a unique flavour to court music and inspired composers across the region. Several works tonight feature the Polonaise, either in its original dance form or reimagined as a concert movement, serving as a vibrant reminder of the broader cultural exchange that shaped the late Baroque period.

### **Johann Schurer (1720–1786): Sinfonia from the serenata *Astrea Placata***

*Allegro – Polonaise – Presto*

Most of the music we perform comes from composers who were well known in their time and are well documented today. But around these famous figures were many skilled musicians who made respectable careers, even if history has remembered them less vividly. Johann Schurer was one such composer. Born near Prague, he spent nearly his entire career as a church composer at the Dresden court. Little is known about his life, but his opera *Galatea*, performed in 1746, marked an auspicious Dresden debut. Though criticised by some contemporaries for not having studied in Italy – a fashionable credential at the time – Schurer wrote music that displays a refreshing individuality. His sinfonias are vibrant late Baroque works, and several, including this one from the serenata *Astrea Placata* (The Pacified Astrea), feature the Polonaise prominently. Performed in Warsaw and based on Greek mythology, the work celebrates peace, and its central Polonaise is the kind that would have been danced at the Dresden court – elegant, rhythmic, and unmistakably local in character.

### **Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767): Concerto for Four Violins in A major, TWV 54:A1**

*Affettuoso – Allegro – Adagio – Allegro*

Telemann is probably the only household name on tonight's programme. His prolific output and keen sense of style made him one of the most influential composers of his age. His concertos, though numerous, are rarely about pure virtuosity; rather, they are studies in colour, texture, and lively dialogue between instruments. This delightful four-violin concerto is a compact work in which the music flows seamlessly from one movement to the next. The third movement (Adagio) serves more as a reflective bridge than a standalone section, leading directly into the energetic finale. Though two soloists dominate the foreground, the other two are far from passive – they interject, accompany and comment throughout. It is a brilliant example of Telemann's mastery in balancing elegance with invention.

## **Johann Melchior Molter (1696–1765): Sonata Grossa in E minor, BWV 4.9** *(Largo) – (Allegro) – Fuga – Andante – Alla breve – (Allegro)*

Born in Eisenach a few years after J.S. Bach, Molter led a very different life. After training as a violinist and studying in Italy, he became Kapellmeister at the court of Duke Wilhelm Heinrich of Saxe-Eisenach. Today, Molter is best remembered for his pioneering writing for wind and brass, including the earliest known concertos for the clarinet. Many of his orchestral works bear the title *Sonata Grossa*, a form he appears to have invented. These works were probably connected to church services and mix Italianate *sinfonia* elements with German contrapuntal techniques. This particular *Sonata Grossa* opens with a short stately French-style introduction before launching into a driving *Allegro* reminiscent of Vivaldi. A central fugue (*Fuga*) leads to a change in mood with an *Andante* that features delicate *pizzicato* strings and flutes. As with many of Molter's works, contrast is key – unexpected shifts of mood and texture keep the listener alert and engaged.

## **František Tůma (1704–1774): Partita in D minor**

*Andante – Presto – Andante – Menuet & Trio – Presto*

Another Bohemian-born composer, František Tůma spent most of his career in Vienna rather than Dresden. As a performer, he specialised in the bass viol and theorbo, and as a composer he was highly respected for his sacred music, which remained popular long after his death. Haydn and Mozart are both known to have admired his work. Tůma's instrumental music, much of it for strings, is marked by expressive chromaticism and sophisticated thematic development. His *Partita* in D minor is a striking example of his skill, featuring bold harmonic shifts, inventive textures, and even a viola solo in the third movement. The opening *Andante* is emotionally charged, the following *Presto* full of sudden key changes, and the finale is fiery and full of character. Throughout, Tůma blends elegance with surprise – a hallmark of his distinctive voice.

## **Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688–1758): Overture Grosso in D major, BWV K:D8**

*Overture – Aria en Polonoise*

Fasch is a familiar name to regular concertgoers, and with good reason. Though he spent some time in Prague, he eventually became Kapellmeister at the court of Zerbst, where he composed a large body of orchestral music. Fasch often experimented with orchestral forms, and the *Overture Grosso* is a curious example. Scholars now believe this work may not be by Fasch at all; the manuscript's title page, where the composer's name would typically appear, has been carefully removed and the name 'Fasch' added in a different hand. Nonetheless, the music is of high quality and typical of the bold orchestral style found at the Saxon courts. We perform just the first and last movements. The opening *Overture* is in classic French style, alternating between majestic slow sections and bustling fugal passages. The final movement, *Aria en Polonoise*, transforms the popular court dance into a concert movement. Its strong, insistent rhythms, angular melodic leaps, and drone effects are unmistakably Polish in flavour. A brief enharmonic shift in the minor section – a sudden, subtle modulation to a distant key – gives the music a surprising twist. Rare in Baroque music, this moment adds a sense of colour inversion, making the piece feel a little unfamiliar – not quite German, French, or Italian, but more Eastern European in spirit.

Programme notes by Richard Austen  
Design/layout by Andrew Welsh



**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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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  
Nick Hardisty  
Christine-Marié Louw  
Carsten Maass

## **Second violins**

Sophia Mücke  
Michael Jenner  
Andrew Spencer  
Jenny Frost

## **Violas**

Elizabeth Hart  
Roger Mears

## **Cellos**

Mary Walton  
Miranda Ford  
Paul Woodmansterne

## **Double bass**

Izzy Nisbett

## **Harpsichord**

Michael Strange

## **Mandora**

Quentin Miller

## **Harp**

Jane Bliss

## **Oboes**

Susan Cooksley  
Craig White

## **Bassoon**

Hilary Ougham

## **Flutes**

Richard Austen  
Aimee Taylor

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.

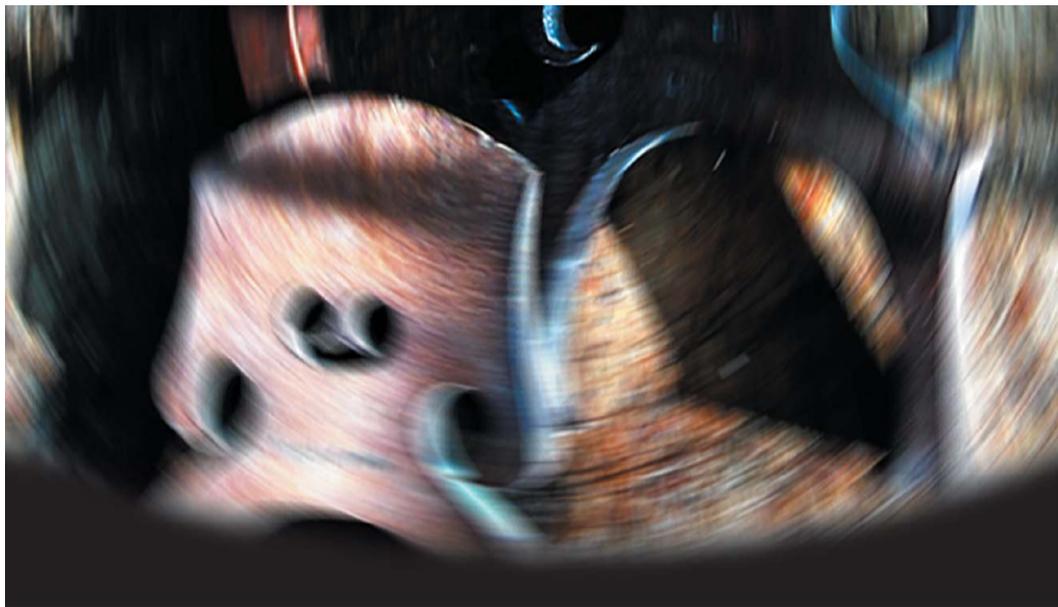


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**Save the date!** Our next concert will be on Sunday 6 July and Sunday 21 September at St Peter's, Belsize Park, directed by Catherine Martin, and on Sunday 30 November, directed by Nick Hardisty. Details will be available soon at [www.belsizebaroque.org.uk](http://www.belsizebaroque.org.uk).





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