



BELSIZE BAROQUE

with the *Amici e
Voci* choir, directed
by Nick Hardisty

Handel
Coronation
Anthems
Ode For St
Cecilia's Day

Sunday 30 November 2025, 6.30 pm

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

www.belsizebaroque.org.uk

Handel! A celebration

Few composers have captured the grandeur of ceremony and the power of praise as completely as George Frideric Handel. Both the Coronation Anthems and the Ode for St Cecilia's Day reveal him at his most celebratory – the former written for the pomp and splendour of a royal occasion, the latter for a more universal rejoicing in music itself. Written within a dozen years of each other, these works showcase Handel's instinctive understanding of how music can exalt, inspire, and move a crowd, whether in Westminster Abbey or in a London concert hall. Together they present a portrait of Handel as both craftsman and dramatist: a composer able to turn faith, ceremony, and sound itself into thrilling theatre.

Coronation Anthems, HWV 258–261

One of the last acts of King George I before his death in 1727 was to sign “*An Act for the naturalizing of George Frideric Handel and others*” and Handel's first commission as a naturalised British citizen was to write the music for the coronation of King George II later that year.

The coronation took place in Westminster Abbey on 11 October 1727. At the King's insistence, it was Handel who was invited to compose the anthems for this momentous state occasion rather than Maurice Greene, who had been appointed as Organist and Composer to the Chapel Royal in succession to the recently deceased William Croft.

The music was planned on a grand scale. From contemporary documents we know that 47 singers and at least 92 instrumentalists were assembled for the coronation – an exceptionally large group of musicians by any standards.

Zadok the Priest (with words adapted from the first chapter of the First Book of Kings) opens with a tour de force that no degree of familiarity can stale. The long ritornello, based on rising violin arpeggios over richly spaced repeated chords for lower strings and woodwind, prepares the way for a resplendent climax at the entry of the voices in seven parts together with the trumpets and drums. The anthem is in three sections and the piece is firmly rooted in D major, the key dictated by the old valveless trumpets. The words of Zadok the Priest have been sung at every coronation since that of King Edgar in 973AD, and Handel's setting has been sung at every one since 1727.

*Zadok, the Priest, and Nathan, the Prophet, anointed Solomon King;
and all the people rejoic'd, and said:
God save the King, long live the King, may the King live for ever!
Amen! Alleluja!*

Let Thy Hand be Strengthened is thought to have been composed between 9 September 1727 and 11 October 1727. The text of the second hymn is from Psalm 89 (verses 13–14). It is divided into three parts: a cheerful light beginning in G major, a melancholy, slow middle section in E minor, and a closing Alleluia part again in G major.

*Let thy hand be strengthened and thy right hand be exalted.
Let justice and judgement be the preparation of thy seat!
Let mercy and truth go before thy face.
Let justice, judgement, mercy and truth go before thy face.
Allelujah.*

The King Shall Rejoice uses a text from Psalm 21 and Handel sets each of the four sentences and the final Allelujah as separate musical sections. The first movement, full of festive pomp and glittering fanfares with a long introductory ritornello, exercises the full strength of the choir

and orchestra. The brief outburst of the triumphant third movement, with its extraordinary harmonic surprise, links directly to the fourth. This movement has more fugal counterpoint and Handel builds the excitement by adding instruments as he goes: first the strings, then the oboes, and finally the trumpets and drums. The last movement is an exuberant double fugue (a fugue with two simultaneous melodies pitted against each other from the outset) that gives the piece a magnificently grand and elaborate conclusion which, as it was performed at the actual crowning section of the coronation service, matched the occasion perfectly.

The King shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord.

Exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation.

Glory and great worship hast thou laid upon him.

Thou hast prevented him with the blessings of goodness and hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head.

Allelujah.

My Heart is Inditing is an adapted and abridged text using verses from Psalms 45 and Isaiah 49, which Purcell had set for the coronation service in 1685. In 1727 it was sung late in the service when Queen Caroline was crowned, and throughout Handel's setting are references in the words that are relevant to a queen. The music is characterised by a more refined and genteel air than the other anthems, which would have been appropriate for the coronation of a queen. The orchestra begins the final movement with a dazzling virtuoso ritornello before the choir enters with all the ceremonial pomp of the other anthems. Handel keeps his trumpets in reserve until the very end, when they add a triumphant dimension to the finale.

My heart is inditing of a good matter:

I speak of the things which I have made unto the King.

Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women

*Upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in vesture of gold
and the King shall have pleasure in thy beauty.*

Kings shall be thy nursing fathers

and queens thy nursing mothers.

Interval

Ode for St Cecilia's Day

Soloists: Clementine Thompson (soprano), Richard Milnes (tenor)

If the Coronation Anthems exalt a monarch, the Ode for St Cecilia's Day exalts music itself. For nearly 20 years beginning in 1683, the musicians of London held special celebrations on 22 November, the feast day of St Cecilia, the patron saint of music. Following a church service, there would be a banquet and a performance of a new ode to St Cecilia, which would praise the power of music. Most notable among the many musicians and poets who participated were Henry Purcell, whose own St Cecilia odes were models for Handel, and John Dryden, who contributed two poems to the celebrations.

Handel composed his Ode for St Cecilia's day, based on one of Dryden's poems, in a mere nine days, during September 1739. In the short period between the composition of the ode and its premiere, he wrote the 12 great concerti grossi of his opus 6, of which the fifth concerto borrows music from the overture to this ode. The Ode for St Cecilia's Day was enormously popular, and Handel revived it for performances nine times during his lifetime.

Handel was clearly inspired by the opportunities in Dryden's poem to depict musical effects. Following the overture, the ode begins with a representation of chaos and the "jarring atoms" being called into order by the power of music. Some of Handel's word painting is unabashedly obvious but very effective. In the first chorus, he depicts the words "*From harmony, from heavn'y harmony*"

with broad, full chords, and the words “*Through all the compass of the notes it ran*” with scales up and down. The poem and the music then go on to portray the power and character of the various instruments, such as the flute’s plaintive sighs and the organ’s celestial voice, ending in a massive final chorus, which describes the trumpet at the last judgement when “*music shall untune the sky.*”

Programme notes by Richard Austen with additions courtesy
of © John Bawden MMus (University of Surrey, UK)

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

Nick Hardisty, our conductor tonight, is a London-based musician who leads a complicated career in all sorts of musical pursuits. Having written his postgraduate thesis on the music of Max Bruch, worked in musical outreach, and given pre-concert talks with renowned international artists, he now divides his time between running music festivals in the Lake District and as much playing and conducting as possible. Regardless of style, period, or instrument, Nick is happiest on the concert platform armed with either modern violin, baroque violin, or conductor’s baton. He is the founder and conductor of the Greenwich-based Meridian Collective, conducted the Chiltern Camerata and *Amici e Voci* in a programme of Handel and Monteverdi, and appeared on baroque violin at Shakespeare’s Globe in *The Secret Theatre*. Inspired by his affection for chamber music and the naturally collaborative nature of smaller ensembles, he loves to apply this conversational approach to music-making to much larger forces.

Soprano **Clementine Thompson** currently studies with Elizabeth Ritchie at the Royal Northern College of Music. She has just completed a summer as a Young Artist with Waterperry Opera Festival and the Vocalzone Scholar at the Da Ponte Festival, Venice. Her operatic repertoire includes Bastien (Fenwold Opera), Alison in *The Wandering Scholar* (Fenwold Opera), and the Philosopher in *Capsule* (RNCM World Premiere).

Tenor **Richard Milnes** spent many years singing in chamber choirs, especially the award-winning Joyful Company of Singers. Richard now focuses on opera and oratorio as a soloist, studying with Cathy Pope. In 2025 Richard has appeared in recitals for Rose Opera, in a Schumann song recital for Penge music and in opera as Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*) for Aquarian Opera, Beppe (*Pagliacci*) for Rose Opera, and Pong (*Turandot*) for Instant Opera.

Since its foundation over 20 years ago, **Amici e Voci** has gone from strength to strength, performing concerts in London and Buckinghamshire to excellent reviews. The *Amici e Voci* repertoire spans the entire canon of choral music from the Renaissance to contemporary, a capella and works with orchestra. The choir is delighted to be working again with Nick Hardisty and Belsize Baroque after their successful first collaboration in 2022 performing Bach’s Magnificat and Ascension Oratorio and their performances of Bach’s Christmas Oratorio in 2023 and 2024.

Sopranos: Cathryn Caunt, Rachael Jones, Jane Metcalfe, Geraldine Rowe

Altos: Debbie Johnstone, Jeremy Rowe, Jo Thompson

Tenors: Mark Johnstone, Paul Parker, Matthew Tansley

Basses: Kevin Bailey, Tim Bull, Andrew Mackinder, Peter Steer



The gift of music at Dots

BRASS · STRINGS · WOODWIND · FOLK
GUITARS · PERCUSSION · GIFTS
ACCESSORIES · SHEET MUSIC
RENTALS · REPAIRS · TUTORS

dotsmusic.co.uk



132 St Pancras Way
Camden, NW1 9NB

020 7482 5424

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



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, the churchwardens of St Peter's for their assistance, and Bill Tuck for loaning us the timpani. We would also like to say a particular thank you today to the people you meet at the door at our concert – David, Louise, Catherine, and George.

First violins

Sophia Mücke (leader)
Miranda Ford
Maria di Bella
Jenny Frost

Second violins

Christine-Marié Louw
Sally Heath
Tamsin Ireland
Jacob Keet

Violas

Maggie Lamelas
George Mitchell

Cellos

David Winfield
Theo Tinkler
Marco Russo

Double bass

Tess Miles

Organ

Alice Foxley

Theorbo

Quentin Miller

Oboes

Susan Cooksley
Craig White

Bassoon

Hilary Ougham

Flute

Richard Austen

Trumpets

Edward Smith
Seb Carpenter
Crispin Brown

Timpani

Andre Cumine



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.



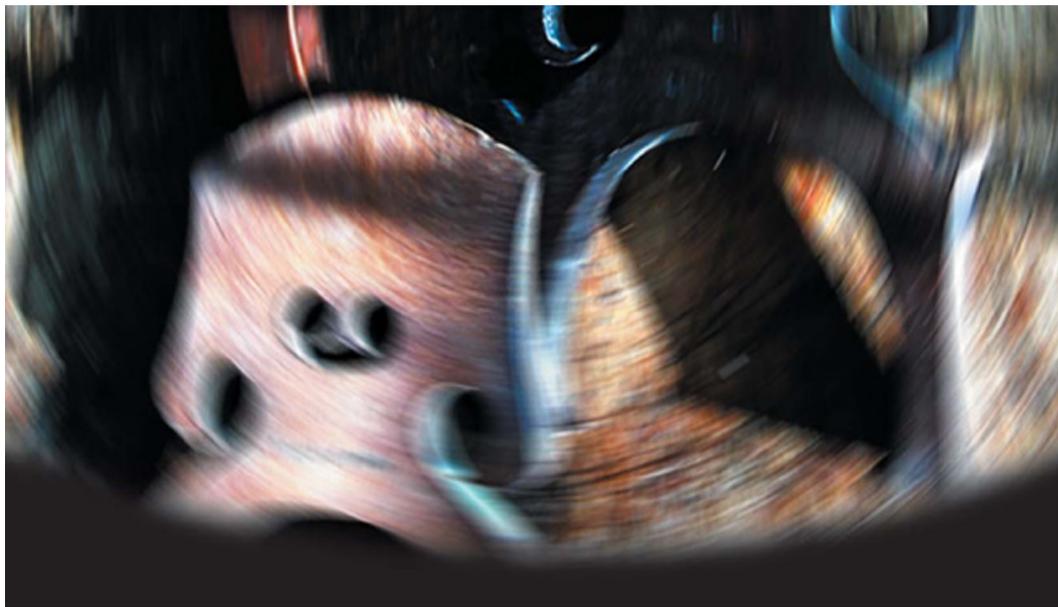
FLORIAN
LEONHARD
FINE VIOLINS

LONDON | HONG KONG | SEOUL | SAN FRANCISCO | NEW YORK
violins@florianleonhard.com | www.florianleonhard.com

Our next concerts will be on Sunday 18 January 2026, Sunday 10 May 2026, Sunday 5 July 2026, all directed by Catherine Martin, and Sunday 13 September 2026, directed by Kati Debretzeni, all at St Peter's Belsize Park. Details will be available soon at www.belsizebaroque.org.uk.



Photo by John Watson



BRIDGEWOOD & NEITZERT

dealers, makers & repairers of good modern & baroque violins, violas, cellos, basses & bows

Expertise led by a passion for sound

Fine selection of instruments and bows

Baroque and Classical period instruments

Repairs and conversions

Tonal adjustments

Bow rehairing

Same day string mail order service

Advice, expertise and valuations

020 7249 9398

146 Stoke Newington Church Street London N16

www.bridgewoodandneitzert.london