



ARTIST  
SERIES

# Venice Baroque Orchestra

## Baroque Concertos

Friday, Nov. 2, 2018

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## Baroque Concertos

Anna Fusek, recorder  
Gianpiero Zanocco, violin  
Massimo Raccanelli, cello  
Federico Toffano, cello

**Friday, Nov. 2, 2018**

For more information, visit [venicebaroqueorchestra.it/cms](http://venicebaroqueorchestra.it/cms)

Venice Baroque Orchestra can be heard on Sony, Deutsche Grammophon, Naïve and Warner Classics.

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Alliance Artist Management, 5030 Broadway Suite 812, New York, NY 10034

# Program

- Sinfonia in G Major for strings and basso continuo, RV 146** Antonio Vivaldi  
(1678-1741)  
I. Allegro  
II. Andante e sempre piano  
III. Presto
- Double Concerto in D minor for soprano recorder and violin, RV 535** Antonio Vivaldi  
I. Largo  
II. Allegro  
III. Largo  
IV. Allegro molto
- Concerto in E minor for violin, strings and basso continuo, RV 273** Antonio Vivaldi  
I. Allegro non molto  
II. Largo  
III. Allegro
- Concerto in B-flat Major for violin and cello, RV 547** Antonio Vivaldi  
I. Allegro molto  
II. Andante  
III. Allegro  
*Gianpiero Zanocco, violin, Massimo Raccanelli, cello*

## Intermission

- Sinfonia in C Major from the opera *Il Giustino*, RV 717** Antonio Vivaldi  
I. Allegro  
II. Andante  
III. Allegro
- Concerto in G minor for two cellos, strings and basso continuo, RV 531** Antonio Vivaldi  
I. Allegro  
II. Largo  
III. Allegro  
*Massimo Raccanelli, cello, Federico Toffano, cello*
- Concerto Grosso in D minor, “La Follia”** Francesco Geminiani  
(after A. Corelli Op. 5 No.12) (1687-1762)  
I. Adagio  
II. Allegro  
III. Adagio  
IV. Vivace  
V. Allegro  
VI. Andante  
VII. Allegro  
VIII. Adagio  
IX. Adagio  
X. Allegro  
XI. Adagio  
XII. Allegro
- Concerto in D Major for recorder, strings and basso continuo, “Il Gardellino,” RV 428** Antonio Vivaldi  
I. Allegro  
II. Cantabile

# III. Allegro Program Notes

Program notes by Marc Shulgold

This concert features three types of music, each thought to have been invented, or at least developed, in Italy during the baroque era (approximately 1600-1759). We'll hear a pair of *sinfonias*, a *concerto grosso* and five concertos—three of them for two instruments, one for solo violin, one for solo recorder. Here's a look at each category:

## Sinfonia

Both halves of the performance open with these purely orchestral works by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741). Known primarily as the composer of some 600 concertos (more on that below), the so-called "Red Priest" became something of a godfather of music in Venice. At that time, *sinfonias* served different purposes. Vivaldi and other composers, including Bach, used them as overtures or inserts in operas, orchestral suites and sacred works, or for celebratory occasions.

The G major *sinfonia*, for example, was written for a program in Dresden honoring Prince Friedrich Christian of Poland in March of 1740. The C major *sinfonia* is from *Il Giustino*, performed in 1724 at carnival time in Rome—an extravagant opera that features numerous borrowings from earlier Vivaldi works (including *The Four Seasons*). Each of these works has three movements, a construction that would later extend to four movements and evolve into the symphony.

## Concerto Grosso

The idea of placing a group of two or three soloists (the *concertino*) in front of an instrumental ensemble (the *ripieno*) began in Rome in the late 1600s. Perhaps the concept grew out of the verse-and-response element in Catholic services. Created as a sort of conversation between soloists and orchestra, the *concerto grosso* ("large concerto") grew in popularity thanks to the brilliant works by Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713), notably a set of 12 published after his death as Op. 6. Those made their way to a pair of composers who had settled in London.

In 1740, George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) created his second set of *concerti grossi*, also Op. 6, which likewise numbered 12, all heavily influenced by Corelli's collection. In 1729, Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762) recast a dozen violin sonatas by Corelli, with whom he had studied in Rome. The last of those explored the repeated chord progression of "La Follia," a popular tune adopted by a dozen or more composers. Its origins can be traced back to Corelli and Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-87). Geminiani would go on to publish two sets of his own *concerti grossi* in 1732.

## Solo Concerto

For generations, music lovers have embraced the glories of this exciting genre. We've been thrilled by it many times in the concert hall, watching a famous virtuoso pound away on the keyboard of a shiny, black grand piano, valiantly matching a huge orchestra in volume. But things started small way back when.

The birth of the concerto goes back to the early 1700s in northern Italy. Two influential elements contributed to its development. As with Rome's *concerto grosso*, the notion of a musical dialogue likely came from masses celebrated in great cathedrals. In Venice, late Renaissance composers Giovanni and Andrea Gabrieli authored glorious works that utilized the spaciousness of St. Mark's, where instrumental and vocal groups were positioned at opposite sides of the sanctuary, creating an exciting stereo "antiphonal" effect. Equally significant were the contributions of the great instrument builders in nearby Cremona: Amati, Guarneri and, most famously, Stradivari. The beautiful tone and ease of playability surely inspired musicians to improve their technique, which in turn encouraged composers to ramp up the virtuosity and invention in their concertos. Vivaldi led the pack, turning out hundreds of works, mostly for solo violin (his instrument of choice). He and other Venetian

composers, including Alessandro Marcello and Tomaso Albinoni, were fashioning concertos that quickly traveled through Europe, expanding the musical horizons of Bach, Handel and others.

Two of tonight's Vivaldi solo concertos show his imagination and endless melodic gifts. The Violin Concerto, RV 273, is set in the relatively unusual key of E minor and features an episodic *Largo* filled with surprises. Part of a set known as the "Farewell Concertos," it was apparently written late in the composer's life, perhaps within weeks of his death in Vienna, where he was ill, impoverished and all-but-ignored. The Recorder Concerto, RV 428, is known as "Il Gardellino" (The Goldfinch), due to the bird-like entrance of the soloist. The European Goldfinch carried religious significance, based on a legend that the bird had landed on Christ's crown of thorns and received a drop of blood around its bill (see Raphael's "Madonna of the Goldfinch"). The RV notation, by the way, refers to a catalog (in German, *Verzeichnis*) assembled in the 1970s by Peter Ryom.

## Double Concerto

Influenced by the popularity of the concerto grosso, numerous composers in the baroque—and in later centuries—explored the idea of two soloists (or more) in front of an ensemble. Here, we have three examples by Vivaldi: two for different instruments (RV 535 for recorder and violin, and RV 547 for violin and cello) and one for a pair of cellos (RV 531).

It's likely that these were written for an unusual group of musicians—the young girls of Venice's Ospedale della Pietà, one of four orphanages for foundlings and orphans. These unwanted newborns were delivered to the Ospedale with the knowledge that they would be raised there to become productive citizens. The boys learned useful crafts while the girls were taught to play musical instruments, with hopes that they would grow to be ladies worthy of marriage. Vivaldi served there off and on for 35 years and was eventually named the director of instrumental music. During that period, he composed numerous works of all different stripes for these talented girls.

His D minor Double Concerto, RV 535, was originally written for two oboes, here arranged for recorder and violin. The Concerto in B-flat for violin and cello, RV 547, is played in its original instrumentation, highlighted by a celestial *Andante* and dance-like final *Allegro*. Incidentally, the unusual combination of violin and cello would appear 150 years later in a double concerto by Brahms. Vivaldi's only known concerto for two cellos was composed when the fretless instrument was relatively new, soon to succeed the fretted viola da gamba as an expressive, low voice. Here, it seems clear that the composer was attracted to the earthy bottom of the cello's range, all but ignoring its upper notes while cleverly alternating close harmonies with some cat-and-mouse chasing by the soloists.

# About the Venice Baroque Orchestra

Founded in 1997 by baroque scholar and harpsichordist Andrea Marcon, the Venice Baroque Orchestra is recognized as one of the very finest period instrument ensembles. The orchestra has received wide critical acclaim for its concert and opera performances throughout North America, Europe, South America, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and China and has appeared in many more cities across the United States than any other baroque orchestra in history.

Committed to the rediscovery of 17th- and 18th-century masterpieces, under Marcon's leadership VBO has given the modern day premieres of Francesco Cavalli's *L'Orione*, Vivaldi's *Atenaide*, *Andromeda liberata*, Benedetto Marcello's *La morte d'Adone* and *Il trionfo della poesia e della musica*, and Boccherini's *La Clementina*. With Teatro La Fenice in Venice, the orchestra has staged Cimarosa's *L'Olimpiade*, Handel's *Siroe*, and Galuppi's *L'Olimpiade*, and reprised *Siroe* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York in its first full staging in the United States. The orchestra has been seen worldwide through several television specials, including films by the BBC, ARTE, NTR (Netherlands), and NHK. It is the subject of three recent video recordings, and the ensemble's performances were also featured on Swiss TV in the documentary film by Richard Dindo, *Vivaldi in Venice*.

Highlights of the 2018 season include two tours with countertenor Franco Fagioli, with concerts in London, Ljubljana, Versailles, Japan and China. The orchestra's annual U.S. tour featured Anna Fusek on recorders. Recent festival appearances included Enescu Festival with mezzo soprano Magdalena Kožená, Grafenegg with harpist Xavier de Maistre and Schleswig Holstein with mandolinist Avi Avital.

The 2016-17 season featured performances of Vivaldi's *Juditha triumphans* at Carnegie Hall, the Krannert Center of the University of Illinois, London's Barbican Centre, and Brussels' Palais des Beaux-Arts; performances with violinist Viktoria Mullova at Vienna and Budapest; an 18-city tour of the U.S. with violinist Nicola Benedetti; and a tour of Japan with Avi Avital.

Earlier performance highlights have included tours of Europe, the United States and Asia with countertenor Philippe Jaroussky; concerts with contralto Marie-Nicole Lemieux in France and Belgium; concerts with Avi Avital in Italy, Croatia, Germany, Spain, France, Mexico, the United States and Canada; performance in Dresden's Frauenkirche with soprano Karina Gauvin; and a tour with Magdalena Kožená, including the Istanbul Festival and the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. In 2010, the VBO premiered Philip Glass' violin concerto, *The American Four Seasons*, with violinist Robert McDuffie in a 28-city U.S. tour.

The orchestra's numerous recordings include Avi Avital in Vivaldi concertos for Deutsche Grammophon; Philippe Jaroussky in Porpora arias for the Erato label, which received a Grammy nomination; and a pasticcio of Metastasio's *L'Olimpiade* for the Naïve label featuring the recording premieres of many 18th-century opera arias, which was awarded Choc du Monde de la Musique.

The VBO has an extensive discography with Sony and Deutsche Grammophon. Their world premiere recording of *Andromeda liberata* for DG was followed by violin concertos with Giuliano Carmignola; Vivaldi sinfonias and concertos for strings; Vivaldi motets and arias with soprano Simone Kermes, two discs with Kožená—Handel arias and Vivaldi arias; Vivaldi violin concertos with Viktoria Mullova and Carmignola, and Italian arias with Petibon. The orchestra's earlier discography on Sony with Carmignola includes *The Four Seasons*, previously unrecorded Vivaldi concertos, and a collection of Bach arias featuring Angelika Kirchsclager. The orchestra has also been honored with the Diapason d'Or, Echo Award, and the Edison Award.

The Venice Baroque Orchestra is supported by Fondazione Cassamarca in Treviso.

# Personnel

## **First Violin**

Gianpiero Zanocco, Concertmaster  
Massimiliano Tieppo  
Mauro Spinazzè  
Anna Fusek

## **Second Violin**

Giorgio Baldan  
Massimiliano Simonetto  
Francesco Lovato  
Giuseppe Cabrio

## **Viola**

Alessandra Di Vincenzo  
Meri Skejic

## **Cello**

Massimo Raccanelli  
Federico Toffano

## **Contrabass**

Alessandro Pivelli

## **Harpsichord**

Erich Traxler

## **Recorder**

Anna Fusek



# Sarah Chang, violin Julio Elizalde, piano

Friday, Nov. 16, 7:30 p.m.  
Macky Auditorium

Starting at \$20 at [cupresents.org](http://cupresents.org)



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