

THE MID-MANHATTAN PERFORMING ARTS FOUNDATION PRESENTS

GREAT MUSIC AT ST. BART'S

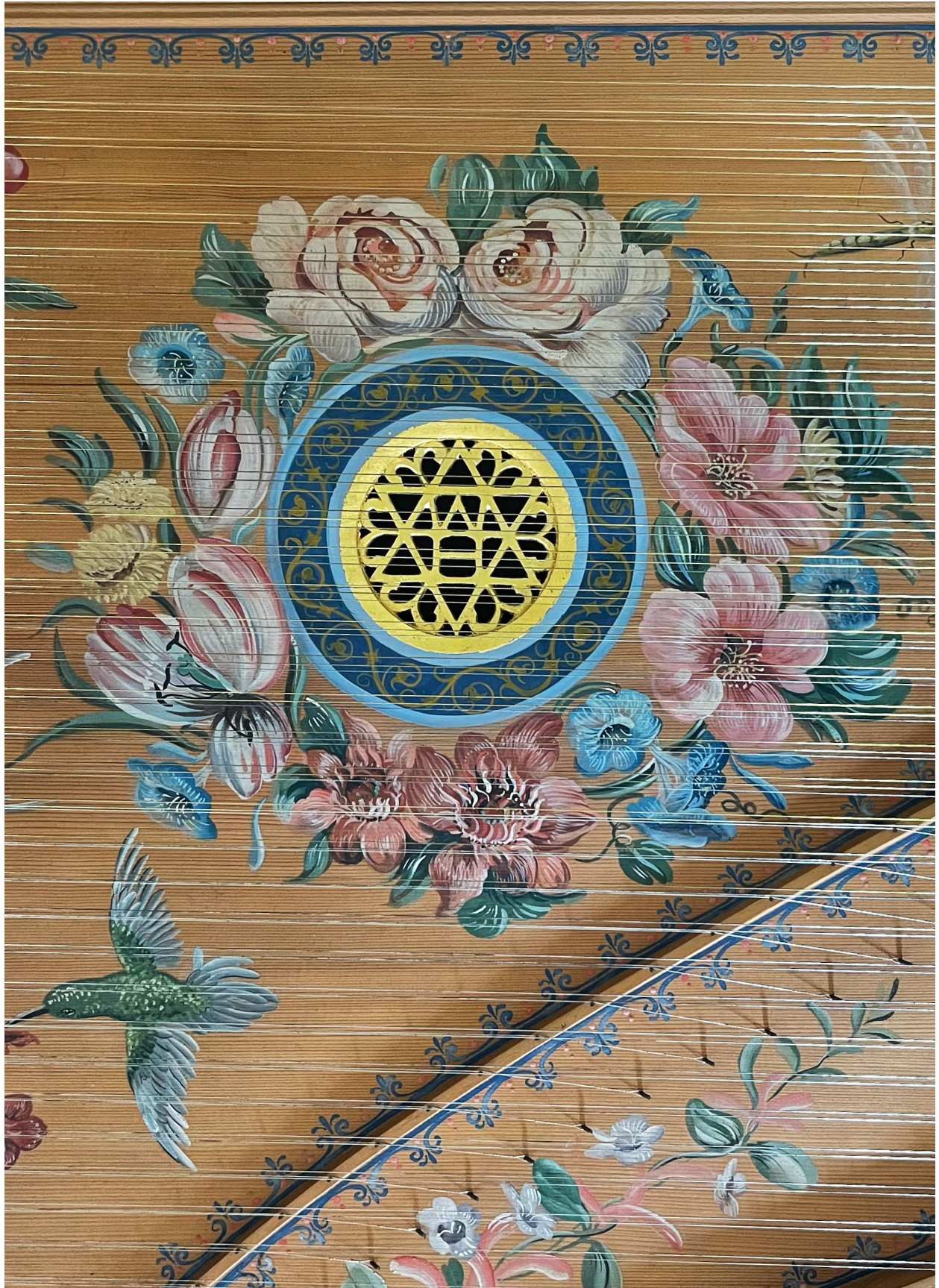
PAOLO BORDIGNON

HARPSICHORD

WITH

DAVID ROSS
BETH WENSTROM
CHIARA FASANI STAUFFER
DAN MCCARTHY
EZRA SELTZER
WEN YANG

TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2024
325 PARK AVENUE AT 51ST STREET, NEW YORK



PROGRAM

Five Sonatas

C Major · Allegro · $\frac{6}{8}$ · K. 159
G Major · Allegretto · $\frac{2}{2}$ · K. 520
E Minor · Allegro · $\frac{3}{8}$ · K. 15
E Major · Andante comodo · $\frac{3}{4}$ · K. 380
C Major · Allegro · $\frac{3}{8}$ · K. 421

Domenico Scarlatti
(1685-1757)

Suite in E Major, HWV 430

Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Air con variazioni [*“The Harmonious Blacksmith”*]

George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

Suite en re

La Joyeuse (Rondeau)
Les Tourbillons (Rondeau)
Les Niais de Sologne & deux Doubles

Jean-Philippe Rameau
(1683-1764)

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, BWV 1050

*Concerto 5to. à une Traversiere, une Violino principale, une Violino è una Viola in ripieno,
Violoncello, Violone è Cembalo concertato.*

Allegro
Affettuoso
Allegro

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

David Ross, solo flute
Beth Wenstrom, solo violin
Chiara Fasani Stauffer, violin
Dan McCarthy, viola
Ezra Seltzer, cello
Wen Yang, bass

*Please join us in the Church after the concert for a short reception,
toasting another successful Great Music at St. Bart's season.*

ABOUT THE REPERTOIRE

AT-A-GLANCE

Domenico Scarlatti (1685 Naples – 1757 Madrid)

Composed 555 sonatas, mostly for his Madrid pupil
Princess Maria Barbara, future Queen of Spain.

Duration: 17 minutes

Each of these sonatas is in Binary form, with each half played twice: AABB. Scarlatti's complete works were catalogued by American harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick, hence the "K." numbers.

K.159 opens with horn fifths and features a number piquant *acciaccatura* ornaments, a kind of grace note where a discordant note is sounded briefly against the principal note.

K. 520 is a charming *Allegretto*, whose motives include Scarlatti's signature large leaps in the left hand, as well as playful accented offbeats.

K. 15 is another *Allegro* with both hands leaping now, and with percussive octaves in the bass concluding each half. There may be a hint of *flamenco* here.

K. 380 in E Major is the best-known of all of Scarlatti's works. It alternates between gentle, enigmatic horn calls (another Scarlatti signature) and a lyrical treble line that soars up to the top of the instrument's range.

K. 421 is quintessential Scarlatti, with virtuosity, dramatic pauses, wide leaps in the bass, guitar-like repeated figurations, and shifts of meter.

AT-A-GLANCE

George Frideric Handel (1685 Halle – 1759 London)

Published the Eight "Great" Suites in 1720, after leaving his native Germany
for London to take up a post at the Royal Academy of Music.

Duration: 13 minutes

The E-Major Suite begins with a *Prelude* in an improvisatory, lyrical style. Typical of Handel's *laissez-faire* approach is how the notated score trails off, leaving the performer to flesh out a few final chords in whatever way one pleases. The *Allemande* and *Courante* are in binary form (AABB) and make up the most common pair of dances in Baroque suites. One contemporary wrote that the *Allemande* "must be composed and likewise danced in a grave and ceremonious manner." *Courante* literally means running and, in the words of another contemporary, it is "chiefly characterized by the passion or mood of sweet expectation. For there is something heartfelt, something longing and also gratifying, in this melody: clearly music on which hopes are built."

The Harmonious Blacksmith is the popular name for the concluding *Air* with five variations in the English "division" style, elaborating upon the *Air* with increasingly quicker note-values. The name was not given by Handel and has inspired a host of fanciful origin stories.

AT-A-GLANCE

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683 Dijon – 1764 Paris)

Published three *Livres de Pièces de Clavecin*.

One of France's greatest composers of opera.

Duration: 10 minutes

In addition to our three composers born in 1685, it seems only fitting to include in a program played on a French double-manual harpsichord, at least some repertoire from the golden age of the French *clavecinistes*. Of the greatest two, François Couperin and Jean-Philippe Rameau, we turn to the latter for three character pieces. All three are in *Rondeau* form, with a refrain alternating with 2 verses or *couplets*: ABACA.

La Joyeuse is a sparkling cascade of scales in two voices.

Les Tourbillons is said to show the influence of Scarlatti. We hear the “heigh-ho” of a work song for much of it, but occasional whirlwinds sweep through, interrupting the work.

Les Niais de Sologne literally translates as “the simpletons of Sologne” (in the Loire valley) and, in the words of one interpreter “may refer to how the locals concealed great cunning under the guise of naivety [...] like the redoubtable TV detective Lt. Frank Columbo.” The simple melody is treated to two variations.

AT-A-GLANCE

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 Eisenach – 1750 Leipzig)

The Brandenburg Concerti were dedicated to the Margrave of Brandenburg in 1721.

There is no record of the gift ever having been acknowledged or the six concerti having been performed at court. No. 5 is first ever solo keyboard concerto.

Duration: 22 minutes

Bach's six Brandenburg Concerti are named for their dedicatee and are widely regarded as among the greatest orchestral compositions of the Baroque era – or any era. They are written for a large cohort of string, wind, brass, and keyboard instruments in a variety of combinations. The fifth concerto features a *concertino* (solo) group of flute, violin, and harpsichord and a *ripieno* (ensemble) of strings. It was likely written to show off a new harpsichord by Michael Mietke paid for by Bach in Berlin on behalf of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen, for whom Bach served as Kapellmeister. One of the most striking features of the piece is the extended, dazzling cadenza in the first movement, which is truly the only of its kind in the whole repertoire.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS



Paolo Bordignon is Organist and Choirmaster of St. Bartholomew's Church and harpsichordist of the New York Philharmonic. He appears this season with Camerata Pacifica, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and, in 2022-23 was a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the American Symphony Orchestra. He has also recently performed with Mark Morris Dance Company, Boston Symphony Chamber Players, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, ECCO, the All-Star Orchestra, and The Knights.

Festival appearances include Aspen, Bard, Bridgehampton, Jackson Hole, Palm Beach, and Vail. He has appeared on NBC, CBS, PBS, CNN, NPR, the CBC, and on Korean and Japanese national television.

As a soloist and chamber musician, he has collaborated with Sir James Galway, Itzhak Perlman, Reinhard Goebel, Paul Hillier, Bobby McFerrin, and Midori, as well as Renée Fleming and Wynton Marsalis in a Juilliard Gala. For the opening of Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall, he performed Philip Glass's *Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra*. He has also appeared in solo performance for New York Fashion Week.

As Organist and Choirmaster at St. Bartholomew's Church, Paolo directs one of the nation's preeminent church music programs and performs on one of the world's largest pipe organs. He has been a frequent recitalist at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, including a 10-recital residency.

Born in Toronto of Italian heritage, Paolo attended St. Michael's Cathedral Choir School before attending the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He is an Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Music, a Fellow of the Royal Canadian College of Organists, and he earned Master's and Doctoral degrees from the Juilliard School.

Swiss violinist **Chiara Fasani Stauffer** enjoys playing music ranging from the Baroque to the twenty-first century and has had the privilege of performing across three continents. Since relocating to the United States in 2012, Stauffer co-founded Time Canvas, a chamber music group committed to bringing innovative music to people across a broad section of society. In addition to her duties as a violinist, she serves as the artistic director of the ensemble.

As a baroque violinist Stauffer performs with groups such as Apollo's Fire, The Washington Bach Consort, and The Sebastians. Other performance highlights have included appearing on a Prairie Home Companion as part of the East 4th Street Quartet, recording a critically acclaimed jazz album with saxophonist Bobby Selvaggio's Transcendental Orchestra, and performing live on radio station WCLV as part of the new music group FiveOne Experimental Orchestra.

Stauffer hold degrees from the Juilliard School and the Basel Hochschule für Musik, as well as a minor from the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis.

Dan McCarthy's playing has been described as “virtuosic” by Seen and Heard International. He was a part of the first class of baroque violists accepted into the historical performance program at The Juilliard School, where he was often featured in performances playing violin, viola d’amore, and viola da gamba.

Dan has served as section violist with the Trinity Wall Street Baroque Orchestra, concertmaster of the Austin Baroque Orchestra, and tenor gambist with Parthenia. He has also toured extensively throughout North America, East Asia, and Europe with artists and groups such as Jordi Savall, Masaaki Suzuki, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, and American Bach Soloists. Here on the east coast he plays with Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity, Washington Bach Consort, New York State Baroque, Artek, REBEL, Clarion Music Society, Early Music New York, Teatro Nuovo, Queens Consort, Academy of Sacred Drama, Brandywine Baroque, and Tempesta Di Mare.

David Ross is a freelance historical flutist based in New York City. He grew up in Minnesota playing piano, violin, and modern flute. Since 2009 his training and career have focused exclusively in historical performance ranging from one-keyed baroque flutes to many-keyed flutes and piccolos from the Classical and Romantic periods.

David is among the last generation to have studied baroque flute with Wilbert Hazelzet at the Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague, Netherlands where he earned a Bachelor’s degree in Early Music in 2011. In 2014 he received a Master’s degree from the Juilliard School’s Historical Performance Program, and prior to specializing in historical performance he received a Bachelor’s degree in modern flute performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music.

From 2023 through 2024 David is performing with the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Helicon Foundation, the Sebastians, TENET, ARTEK, New York Baroque Inc, Saint Peter’s Bach Collegium Orchestra and Soloists, Bach at St. Bartholomew’s, Four Nations Ensemble, Three Notch’d Road, Lyra Baroque Orchestra, Mercury Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonie Austin, and the Portland Baroque Orchestra.

Hailed for his “scampering virtuosity” (*American Record Guide*) and “superb” playing (*The New York Times*), cellist **Ezra Seltzer** is the principal cellist of the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, New York Baroque Incorporated, and Early Music New York and a founding member of the Sebastians. He has frequently appeared as guest principal cellist of Musica Angelica and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, where he earned praise for his “delicate elegance and rambunctious spirit” (*Twin Cities Pioneer Press*) in performances of all six Brandenburg Concertos. Other performances with the SPCO include Handel’s Messiah with Jonathan Cohen and J.S. Bach’s St. Matthew Passion with Paul McCreesh. With Musica Angelica, he appeared in performances of J.S. Bach’s St. John Passion in Walt Disney Concert Hall with the Los Angeles Master Chorale. He attended Yale University, where he received his Bachelor of Arts in history and Master of Music in cello, and graduated from the inaugural class of Juilliard’s historical performance program.

Violinist **Beth Wenstrom**'s chamber playing has been praised as "elegant and sensual, stylishly wild" (The New Yorker) and is an original member of the "eclectic and electrifying early-music ensemble," ACRONYM (Boston Globe.) As a soloist and concertmaster, she has performed with Trinity Wall Street Baroque Orchestra, New York Baroque Incorporated, Sebastian Chamber Players, TENET as well as the Washington Cathedral Baroque Orchestra. She has also performed in Apollo's Fire, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra and other ensembles throughout the country and abroad. Beth serves as string coach for the baroque ensemble at SUNY Stony Brook and has taught violin and baroque orchestra as a recurring guest teacher at Oberlin Conservatory. She has also coached at Cornell University, Rutgers University, Vassar College, as well as summer institutes such as the Baroque Performance Institute at Oberlin and the Amherst Early Music Festival.

Wen Yang plays double bass and viola da gamba, and has earned praise both for her "angelically played" solos (Charleston Today) and for "knocking people off their seats" (Sarasota Herald-Tribune). She enjoys being a freelance musician, and has performed with musicians including William Christie, Jordi Savall, Masaaki Suzuki, Monica Huggett, Ton Koopman, and Richard Egarr.

Wen is the founder and artistic director of New York Baroque Incorporated.

An alumnus of The Juilliard School and Yale School of Music, Wen studied viola da gamba with Sarah Cunningham, and double bass with Don Palma, Timothy Cobb and Robert Nairn. She can also be found cooking, and living in New York City with her husband, cellist Ezra Seltzer.

ABOUT THE INSTRUMENT

William Hyman was relatively unknown until he finished a double, based on the Yale Blanchet, in early 1969 which overnight made him the latest darling among harpsichord players and caused a rush to Hoboken. He does everything himself in a large loft equipped mostly with hand tools, where he and his wife Doris also live.

His cabinet work is precise, his soundboard painting is spectacular, his outside case decoration a beautifully mellow dark green offset by panels of lighter green. He works very much in the traditional way, using pearwood jacks with holly tongues and boar's bristle for a spring. The keyboard is made from linden, covered in ebony and bone. The action is a marvel. It is light, responsive, yet crisp. And he achieves an extraordinary tone which virtually assaults the listener with its fullness.

from Wolfgang Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord: Twentieth-Century Instruments and Their Makers*.
New York: October House, 1969.

In a book that was as influential in the harpsichord community as it was notorious for harsh criticism, such words of praise were truly exceptional for a young builder like Brooklyn-born William Hyman. But when they went to print, alas, Hyman had only five years yet to live.

While many harpsichord builders of the twentieth century sought to improve upon the designs of the past, Hyman believed that harpsichords of the 16th to 18th centuries, like great old stringed instruments, were unsurpassed in design and artistry. He used only authentic historical materials and designs based on painstaking research. And while modern builders tried their hand at various national styles – Flemish, Italian, German, English – Hyman, like his forebears, dedicated all of his artistry to just one: the French harpsichord.

Alas, he died at a young age, having completed a few dozen instruments, leaving behind a small number in partial completion, plus a substantial waitlist of buyers who though they might never play their hoped-for instruments. But every commission was honored to Hyman's exact specification and high standards. His friend D. Jacques Way bought the firm and Hyman's team of artisans continued their work until every instrument that had been ordered was delivered, with "William Hyman" on the name batten.

The instrument played tonight was commissioned in 1973 by Lenora McCroskey, now professor emerita of harpsichord at the University of North Texas at Denton. It was completed posthumously, in 1976, by D. Jacques Way and Hyman's principal apprentice John Bennett. Mr. Bennett has continued to maintain it, most recently re-quilling and re-voicing it in 2018.

Hyman harpsichords are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Juilliard School, and the Yale Collection (alongside the ca.1740 François-Étienne Blanchet instrument that inspired them).

They have been the personal instrument of professors and curators at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Smithsonian Institution, the Curtis Institute, the Eastman School, the Juilliard School (three successive teachers), and the New York Philharmonic (three successive harpsichordists), among many others.

It is a fine example of the French expressive double harpsichord at the height of its prestige during the reigns of Louis XV and XVI, the age of the great harpsichordist-composers including Couperin and Rameau.

Inspired by Flemish instruments of previous generations, the early eighteenth-century French makers extended the range to five full octaves and refined the mechanism to make it responsive to a very light touch. There are two choirs of strings at normal or 8-foot pitch, and a third choir of strings at 4-foot pitch, which sounds an octave higher. These sets of strings may be played singly, or in combination, using the two keyboards for contrast in volume and timbre. A *buff* stop can dampen the strings, creating a kind of lute or *pizzicato* effect.

In the style of French furniture of the time, the cases of these instruments were often elaborately decorated and water gilded, and the soundboard painted with flora and fauna. The apron stand is in the style of Louis XVI, characterized by elegance and neoclassicism, with turned and fluted legs, and carved rosettes.

The harpsichord is strung in red brass (lowest), yellow brass, and iron (highest), playing at the same pitch level as *Kammerton* in Leipzig in Bach's time: A415. (This is one semi-tone lower than modern pitch.) The temperament used tonight is *Kirnberger III*, described by Bach's student Johann Philipp Kirnberger in his 1779 theoretical work, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik* (The Art of Strict Composition in Music). As a well-tempered tuning system, it is possible to play in all major and minor keys while still retaining variety of tonal color from one key to the next.

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