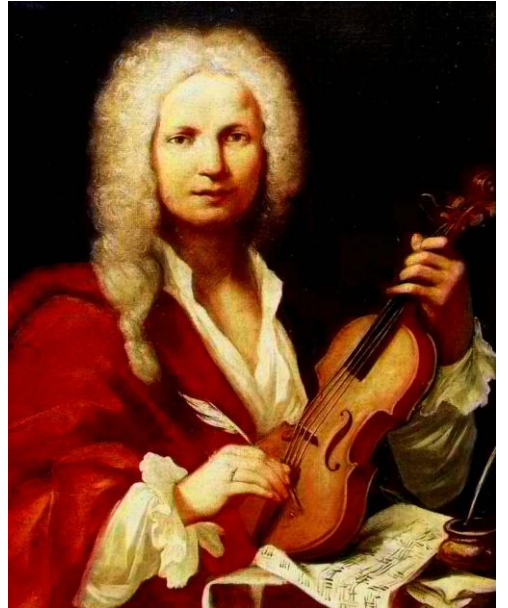




Giuseppe Arcimboldo "Autumn" (1572)



Anonymous "Antonio Vivaldi" (1723)



Nicolas Tournier "The Concert" (1725-50)



Midwinter Concert:

Giants of the High Baroque
Bach & Vivaldi

Presented by Sonoma Bach in association with the Green Music Center

featuring

Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Elizabeth Blumenstock, director

Aaron Westman, associate director

Friday, January 8, 2016

Schroeder Hall

Green Music Center

Giants of the High Baroque: Bach & Vivaldi

Concerto for violin and strings in F major, *L'Autunno*, RV 293 Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)
from *Le Quattro Stagioni*

Concerto for strings in G minor Francesco Durante (1684-1755)

Concerto for organ in D major, BWV 972 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
transcribed from Vivaldi's Concerto for violin and strings in G major, RV 299

Violin Concerto in B-flat major, HWV 288 Georg Friedrich Handel (1685-1759)



Concerto in D minor for violin and strings J.S. Bach
from Concerto for harpsichord and strings in D minor, BWV 1052

Concerto for four violins in G major, TWV 40:201 Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

Concerto for strings in G minor, RV 156 Vivaldi

Program Notes

Nowadays, the term concerto refers exclusively to a solo instrument playing in an individualized, heroic manner, with a direct outpouring of valiant personal expression rising above an orchestral accompaniment. A quick glance at tonight's program is proof that this wasn't always the case. In fact, our modern, romanticized concept of "heroism" is decidedly un-baroque. Unrestrained heroism, or action for the sake of the individual, did nothing to glorify the nobility, the employer, or God, so therefore it would have been considered weak and undesirable. (Our down-bow and up-bow symbols come from Latin words, *nobilis* and *vilis*, literally noble and evil, and meaning strong and weak.) Rather, the culture of the 18th century spawned a style that valued rhetorical persuasion as a means of moving the emotions over unrestrained heroism.

This is not to say that baroque musicians eschewed expressiveness... (You probably wouldn't be sitting here, tonight, if that were the case.) Quite the contrary! The very dawn of the baroque period represented a shift away from linear, contrapuntal music--lines moving against each other following strict rules--to a more expressive, rhetorically based melody and bassline driven style which followed speech patterns and phrasing. The pioneering composer Claudio Monteverdi called this new wave *seconda prattica* (second practice), and others, like Giulio Caccini called it *stile moderno* (modern style). The 17th century, scene of harrowing outbreaks of the plague and nearly constant war and strife, spawned some of the most expressive music ever written, and in this new style.

However, one thread of the late Renaissance that remained alongside but distinct from the *seconda prattica* was a late 16th century *polychoral* style that involved using (originally) the grand acoustical space of Venice's St. Mark's cathedral to house multiple groupings of instruments and voices, singing and playing in opposition to each other, and sometimes joining together in a musical conversation. The style of imitative and sometimes argumentative writing organic to this performance practice created a new thread of ideas. Unlike Renaissance counterpoint, which was deemed too cerebral and abstract by the pioneers of this movement, the polychoral style remained an important thread as the baroque period progressed in the 17th century. Heinrich Schütz carried this Venetian practice back to the German speaking states, and taught and influenced several generations of important composers in the 17th century. Way to the south, in Rome, Italy, Arcangelo Corelli developed a new style of *concerto grosso* for a group of solo instruments playing in conversation with a group of "stuffing" instruments called *ripieno*. Corelli had a profound

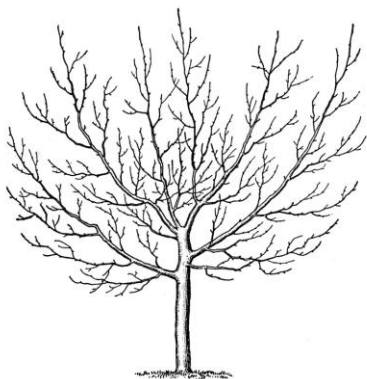
impact on the successive generations, including, most notably, the young Georg Friedrich Handel, who started out his career in Rome writing for Corelli's band--Handel's one concerto for solo violin was likely written for Corelli to play, himself--as well as the Neapolitan composer Francesco Durante, and the concerto's greatest 18th century proponent, Antonio Vivaldi.

The word *concerto*, bringing together opposite "fighting" sides, originally referred to voices and instruments as "opposing" groups (rather than just doubling the same lines). Similarly, two instruments or voices playing the same line or singing the same words in imitation or alternation, was called *stile concertato*. Another, less direct connection has to do with the tradition, popular in the early and mid-17th century, of depicting a musical battle scene. Monteverdi, again the pioneer, called this "agitated" style *stile concitato*, and this style involved repetitive, agitated bow strokes, percussive snaps, and many trills.

What brings all of the pieces on tonight's program together, aside from their titles, is that each contains elements of this style of instrumental voices having a conversation with each other, and maybe even telling a story, as in Vivaldi's famous *L'Autunno*. Even the Bach organ concerto (which involves just one instrument) was a transcription of a Vivaldi *concerto grosso*. J.S. Bach honed his sublime style and skill by copying and transcribing works, including many by Antonio Vivaldi and several by Georg Philipp Telemann, and adapting the Italian concerto style to his own unique brand of baroque counterpoint. Eventually, Bach himself pioneered the keyboard concerto, in addition to following Vivaldi's lead of writing solo violin concertos.

We hope that you enjoy this exploration of the concerto in the 18th century, with a few examples of its many representative and rhetorically expressive forms!

-- Aaron Westman



Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Concertos for Winter

CD \$20

Available for purchase in the lobby

Biographies

Widely admired as a Baroque violinist of expressive eloquence and technical sparkle, **Elizabeth Blumenstock** is a long-time concertmaster, soloist, and leader with the Bay Area's American Bach Soloists and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and is concertmaster of the International Handel Festival in Goettingen, Germany. In Southern California, Ms. Blumenstock is Music Director of the Corona del Mar Baroque Music Festival. Her love of chamber music has involved her in several accomplished and interesting smaller ensembles including Musica Pacifica, Galax Quartet, Ensemble Mirable, Live Oak Baroque, the Arcadian Academy, and Trio Galanterie. An enthusiastic teacher, Ms. Blumenstock teaches at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the American Bach Soloists' summer Festival and Academy, and the International Baroque Institute at Longy. Ms. Blumenstock plays a 1660 Andrea Guameri violin built in Cremona, Italy, on generous loan to her from the Philharmonia Baroque Period Instrument Trust.

Maria Caswell studied violin and Historically Informed Performance at New England Conservatory in Boston, Massachusetts. She is a founding member of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. In addition to Philharmonia, Maria has performed with American Bach Soloists, Jubilate, Santa Rosa Symphony, and Magnificat, among others. She is a member of VOT (Very Old Time) Music, a quintet based in Sebastopol, California. In addition she is an active violin and viola teacher. She lives near the tiny hamlet of Occidental in Sonoma County with her family and her beloved teapot.

Henry Lebedinsky performs on historical keyboards across the United States and the United Kingdom. He currently plays with The Vivaldi Project (DC), Quince (Boston), and Ensemble Vermillion (Berkeley) and directs the period instrument ensemble The Seicento String Band. He is the founder of the Music @ St. Alban's concert series in Davidson, North Carolina and served as interim Artistic Director of Charlotte Chamber Music, Inc. and Director of Rochester, NY's The Publick Musick. In addition to performing, Mr. Lebedinsky has taught masterclasses and workshops on historical keyboards and performance practice at the New England Conservatory, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Appalachian State University, as well as at the American Guild of Organists 2011 Region IV Convention. An avid composer of music for choir and organ, his sacred music is published by Carus-Verlag Stuttgart. His editions of vocal works of 17th-century nun composers for Saltarello Editions have been performed around the world. Lebedinsky holds degrees from Bowdoin College and the Longy School of Music, where he

earned a Master of Music in historical organ performance. He currently lives in Minnesota where he serves as Music Minister at St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church in White Bear Lake.

Tyler Lewis received his B.A. from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music while under the instruction of Bettina Mussumeli. Specializing in baroque music, Tyler has appeared in groups such as Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, LOBO, Santa Rosa Symphony, Marin Symphony, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and has performed at Festival Del Sole in the Napa Valley and St. Paul International Chamber Music Festival. Tyler Lewis has appeared in master classes with Robert Mann, James Greening-Valenzuela, Zaven Melikian and has had solo appearances with Contra Costa Wind Symphony. During the spring, Tyler is an evaluator for the Music Teachers Association of California's merit program and runs a year round private violin studio located in Santa Rosa, California. With his spare time he enjoys nights under the stars with a telescope, practicing the art of Lapidary, cooking, and racing motorcycles.

"Brilliant virtuoso violinist" (*-Early Music America*) **Aaron Westman** has performed as a soloist, principal player, or chamber musician with Agave Baroque, American Bach Soloists, Berkeley West Edge Opera, Bach Collegium San Diego, El Mundo, Ensemble Mirable, Live Oak Baroque Orchestra, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Magnificat, Musica Angelica, Musica Pacifica, New Hampshire Music Festival, Pacific Bach Project, Seraphic Fire, and The Vivaldi Project, and he also performs regularly with Orchester Wiener Akademie and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Aaron co-directs the "energized, free-spirited" (*-Early Music America*) chamber ensemble Agave Baroque, 2014-15 Ensemble in Residence for Presidio Sessions, as well as Sonoma Bach's own Live Oak Baroque Orchestra. Aaron has recorded for Hollywood, and on the Dorian/Sono Luminus, VGo Recordings, NCA, and Philharmonia Baroque Productions labels, as well as live on KPFK (Los Angeles), WDAV (North Carolina), BBC, ORF (Austria), and as a soloist on NPR's Harmonia and Performance Today radio programs. Aaron tours extensively worldwide, including with two projects starring the actor John Malkovich. Aaron holds a Master of Music from the Indiana University School of Music. His principal teachers were Stanley Ritchie, Alan de Veritch, Geraldine Walther, and Theodore Arm. For three years, Aaron taught baroque strings at CalArts, near Los Angeles. He is currently Music Director of the Santa Rosa Symphony's Young People's Chamber Orchestra.

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