



 *the*
SEBASTIANS

THE FIVE CONCERTI

Saturday, September 9, 2023 at 5pm

Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian Church, New York City



the Sebastians

Flute

David Ross

Violin

Daniel Lee
Mandy Wolman
Beth Wenstrom

Viola

Kyle Miller
Jessica Troy
Alissa Smith

Violoncello

Ezra Seltzer
Charlie Reed
Adrienne Hyde

Viola da gamba

Adrienne Hyde
Charlie Reed

Contrabass and Violone

Nathaniel Chase

Harpsichord

Jeffrey Grossman

PROGRAM

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

(1685–1750)

Brandenburg Concerto no. 6

BWV 1051 (before 1721) in B \flat major for two violas da braccio,
two violas da gamba, cello, violone, and harpsichord

[]

Adagio ma non tanto

Allegro

Jessica Troy and Kyle Miller, viola da braccio

Ezra Seltzer, cello

Adrienne Hyde and Charlie Reed, viola da gamba

ANTONIO VIVALDI

(1678–1741)

Concerto in G minor, RV 531

for two cellos, strings, and basso continuo

Allegro

Largo

Allegro

Ezra Seltzer and Adrienne Hyde, cello

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

(1685–1759)

Concerto grosso in G major, HWV 314

op. 3, no. 3 for flute, violin concertino, strings, and basso continuo

Largo e staccato

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro

David Ross, flute

Daniel Lee, violin concertino

J. S. BACH

Brandenburg Concerto no. 5

BWV 1050 (before 1721) in D major for flute, violin, and harpsichord
solo with ripieno violin, viola, and cello, and contrabass

Allegro

Affettuoso

Allegro

David Ross, flute

Beth Wenstrom, violin principale

Jeffrey Grossman, harpsichord

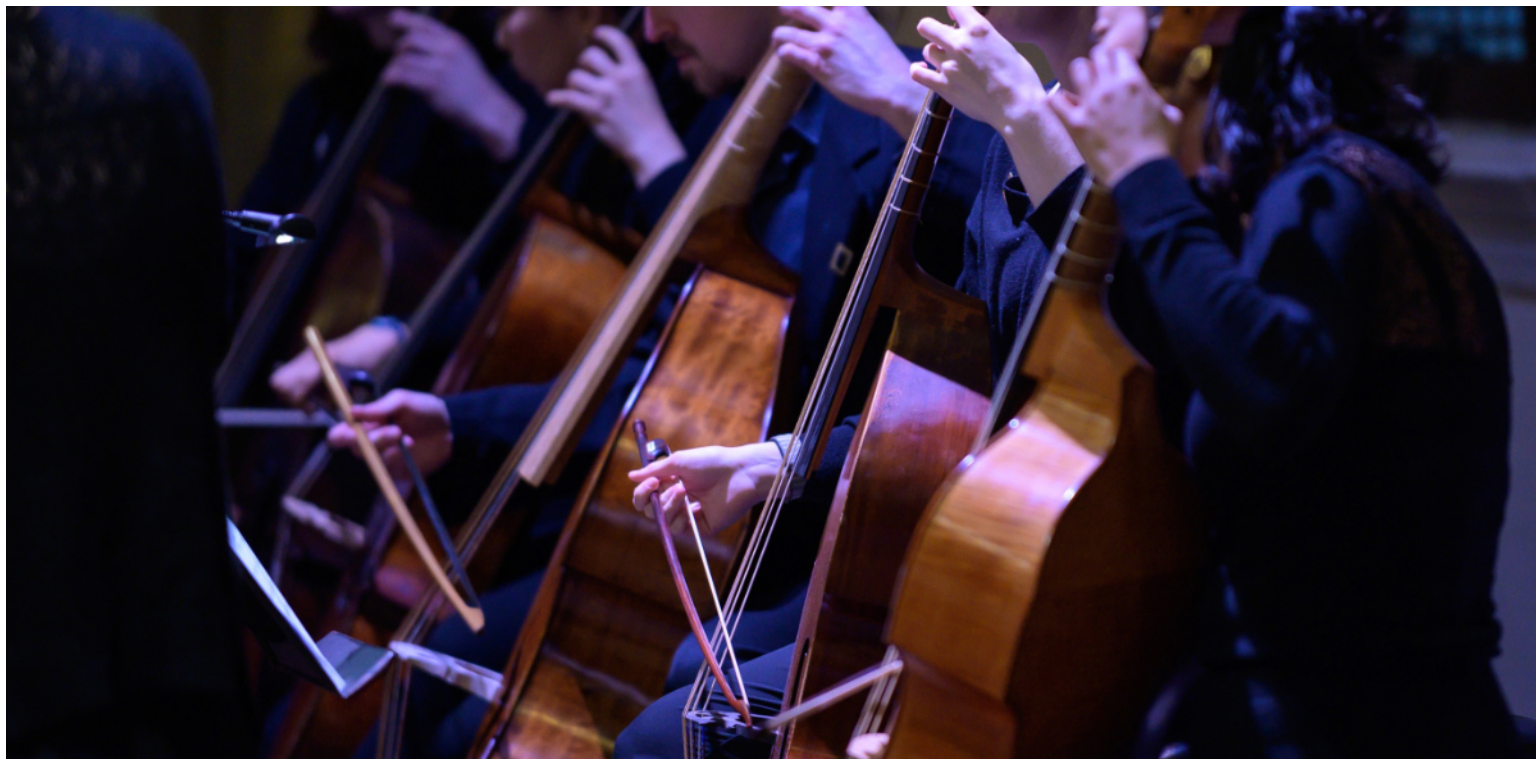
Brandenburg Concerto no. 3

BWV 1048 (before 1721) in G major for three violins, three violas,
and three cellos, with violone and harpsichord

[]

Adagio

Allegro



WELCOME

Thank you for being a part of our 2023–24 season! We're excited to continue our exploration of baroque music—this season, we're focusing especially on interconnections among composers from Germany, Italy, and France, including interdisciplinary collaborations with actors, photographers, and painters.

To kick things off tonight, we shine a spotlight on our amazing musicians with a program of concerti.

The Italian word *concerto* comes from *concertare*, “to harmonize or work together” and also “to debate or dispute.” In fact, the musical form seems to embody both definitions—an ensemble joining together inevitably creates both harmonious musical discussion and friendly arguments!

The earliest pieces called concerti, from around 1580, were sacred works for singers and instrumentalists in which the instruments had independent parts, rather than just doubling the voices. By the late 1600s, a few forms of

concerto for instruments alone emerged in Italy, and the Roman type became particularly influential. In a Roman concerto, a core solo group (the “concertino”) of two violins, cello, and continuo is complemented by a larger group of string players (the “ripieno”).

Antonio Vivaldi's innovation on this form was an organizational structure that became a model for composers across Europe, including Bach. In a “Vivaldian concerto,” a repeating block of music called the *ritornello* (“little return”) is played by the whole ensemble. After the first statement of the *ritornello*, the soloist(s) perform “episodes” which develop different musical ideas, modulate to new harmonic areas, and generally show off—followed by the memorable *ritornello*, returning in different keys as many times as the composer desires. The *ritornello* serves as a structural guidepost throughout the movement, while the solo episodes allow a nearly infinite amount of variety. Not every movement of every Vivaldi concerto exemplifies this form—for example, the

first movement of his **Concerto for two cellos** begins instead with the two soloists, and the concerto's middle movement, scored for only the two soloists and continuo, is an example of an older and simpler style. The third movement, however, is in textbook ritornello–episode form.

Handel's opus 3 concerti grossi were published in London in 1734, probably without Handel's involvement or even knowledge—publisher John Walsh was likely trying to capitalize on Handel's fame by cobbling together and arranging a variety of earlier works. The movements of the **Concerto no. 3** are mostly derived from vocal music, but the closing Allegro is based on a solo harpsichord fugue arranged by Walsh—with many errors (mostly corrected since then)! While the first Allegro movement is indeed in Vivaldian ritornello form, the rest of the piece is a good example of the many shapes a “concerto” could take in its earliest years.

Johann Sebastian Bach studied and made keyboard arrangements of many Italian concerti, including quite a few of Vivaldi's. All three of the Brandenburg Concerti you hear today are examples of how Bach completely absorbed the ritornello form and adapted it to his own contrapuntal style. Brandenburg Concerti no. 3 and 6 are examples of concerti for solo instruments with a basso continuo group (harpsichord and contrabass), but no additional orchestra members. The structure of ritornello and solo episodes remains clear, but there are no additional players coming in for the ritornelli.

Brandenburg 6, written for six musical voices (Bach loved the symbolism of numbers), is unique in its solo instruments: two violas “of the arm” (normal violas), two violas “of the leg” (violas da gamba, uncommon and antiquated by Bach's time), and a cello.



Bach in Motion, Feb. 2023

Bach's title for the concerto makes it clear that he considers all five of those instruments soloists, but the composition points to the violas and cello as the true stars—the older viol family takes a backseat to the action as the piece progresses. A concerto with no violins is very unusual, and in fact at this point in Germany, violas and cellos usually played relatively simple, accompanimental parts; violas da gamba, if they appeared at all, usually were given more special treatment, in the spotlight. In *Brandenburg 6*, Bach turns this whole structure upside down.

Brandenburg 5 is the most historically important of the *Brandenburgs*, as it heralds the first appearance of a harpsichord as true concerto soloist, a genre that would become a favorite for centuries. The trio solo group also includes a transverse flute—only recently arrived from France—and a solo violin. *Brandenburg 5* begins as a typical Vivaldian-style concerto with episodes featuring the trio of soloists alternating with a short, characterful ritornello. The unusual part of the movement comes near the end, when the harpsichord is suddenly left completely alone. Though Bach's contemporaries had begun to write solo moments without accompaniment (we now call them cadenzas), they were not usually related to the rest of the movement. Bach manages to combine brilliant embellishments with musical

material he had already introduced—though, like any good flight of fancy, the cadenza eventually devolves into 18th-century rock music.

Brandenburg 3 features three groups of three solo instruments—another numerical symmetry. Like *Brandenburg 6*, nearly every player is a soloist. Perhaps *Brandenburg 3*'s most unique element is its slow “movement,” which Bach notates as only two chords for the whole orchestra. Did Bach assume the chords would be extended by improvisation, or is this the embodiment of the nine soloists as a single unit?

We love playing concerti—the musical dialogue highlighting the virtuosic and expressive capacities of all our instruments in as many different ways as the imagination can hold! I hope that tonight's concert leaves you thinking and feeling long after the final note.

Thank you for accompanying us on this musical voyage, and we hope you'll join us for more music this season! Coming up next we'll be downtown at Alchemical Studios on Oct. 8 for *Obsession and Legacy*, a uniquely curated program exploring Arcangelo Corelli's fame, interspersed with actors performing contemporary theatrical scenes on the theme of ambition. We can't wait to share it with you.

— Jeffrey Grossman, *Artistic Director*



The 24 Violins, Mar. 2023



The Sebastians are a dynamic and vital musical ensemble specializing in music of the baroque and classical eras. Lauded as “everywhere sharp-edged and engaging” (*The New York Times*), the Sebastians have also been praised for their “well-thought-out articulation and phrasing” (*Early Music Review*) and “elegant string playing... immaculate in tuning and balance” (*Early Music Today*). Their 2018 uncondacted *St. Matthew Passion* with TENET Vocal Artists was called “shattering” and “a performance of uncommon naturalness and transparency.”

Recent seasons have included dozens of originally conceived programs, including collaborations with poets, choreographers, and actors; a musical installation in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine; programs dealing with musical “immigration” and nationalism; and major works of J.S. Bach.

Winners of the Audience Prize at the 2012 Early Music America Baroque Performance Competition, the Sebastians were also finalists in the 2011 York International Early Music Competition and the 2011 Early Music America/Naxos Recording Competition.

They have performed at the Princeton Festival (NJ) Music Matters (LaGrúa Center in Stonington, CT), Friends of Music at Pequot Library (Southport, CT), St. John’s Episcopal Church (Tulsa, OK), Juilliard in Aiken (SC), in the Twelfth Night Festival and Concerts@One at Trinity Wall Street (New York, NY), Early Music in Columbus (Ohio), the Renaissance and Baroque Society

of Pittsburgh (PA), the Academy of Early Music (MI), and Houston Early Music (TX). The Sebastians are currently in residence at the Yale Collection of Musical Instruments.

The ensemble’s recordings range from *Night Scenes from the Ospedale*, pairing Vivaldi concerti with newly composed interludes by Robert Honstein (“beautifully-nuanced playing and thoughtful expressivity”); to *the Sebastians a 2: Virtuoso Music of the Holy Roman Empire*, exploring the rich baroque repertoire of music for violin and harpsichord written by composers from modern-day Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic; and, most recently, *Folia*, which juxtaposes trio sonatas and vocal works by Corelli, Colista, Handel, and Vivaldi, featuring soprano Awet Andemicael.



Photos by Michael Kushner and Grace Copeland

PERFORMERS



Bassist **Nathaniel Chase** performs a wide range of music, from period performance with the Sebastians, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, and Early Music New York, to orchestral repertoire with the Riverside Symphony and Allentown Symphony, and new music with Ensemble LPR and Ensemble Échappé. He performed on Broadway in the critically acclaimed production of *Farinelli and the King* with countertenor Iestyn Davies. He is a graduate of the New England Conservatory and the Yale School of Music, where he was a winner of the 2010 Woolsey Hall Concerto Competition.



Keyboardist and conductor **Jeffrey Grossman** specializes in vital, engaging performances of music of the past, through processes that are intensely collaborative and historically informed. As the artistic director of the Sebastians, Jeffrey has directed Bach's *Passions* and Handel's *Messiah* from the organ and harpsichord, and he is a frequent performer with TENET, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and numerous other ensembles across the country. Recent seasons include his conducting operas of Haydn and Handel with Juilliard Opera, leading Monteverdi's *Vespers* with the Green Mountain Project in New York and Venice, and conducting a workshop of a new Vivaldi pastiche opera for the Metropolitan Opera. A native of Detroit, Michigan, he holds degrees from Harvard, Juilliard, and Carnegie Mellon University. Jeffrey teaches performance practice at Yale University. jeffreygrossman.com



Adrienne Hyde is a multi-instrumentalist specializing in historical performance practices on the baroque cello, bass viol, lirone, and bass violin. She graduated from the Eastman School of Music in 2020 and in 2023 she completed her master's degrees in baroque cello and viola da gamba at the Juilliard School on full scholarship. At Juilliard she was a Morse Teaching Artist, a Music Advancement Program Fellow, and a Gluck Community Service Fellow, through which she taught in NYC public schools and mentored young cellists while providing musical service to her community. In 2022 she joined the Carmel Bach Festival as a Young Artist performing in a string quartet focused on self study of classical and romantic period performance practice. In the 2022–23 season she performed as a guest with American Baroque Orchestra, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and appeared as a guest musician with Repast Baroque, the Sebastians, and in recital at the Helicon Foundation. She also joined the Belgian vocal ensemble Vox Luminis at the Boston Early Music Festival in June 2023. Adrienne is deeply committed to equity. She is a passionate artistic administrator for the Valissima Institute, a conducting training program for young women committed to gender equity in classical music. Three years ago she co-founded Open Source Baroque, a broken consort of four historical performance students dedicated to the music of women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ composers. She is also a regular volunteer at the Mount Sinai Psychiatric hospital, where she plays weekly in a high acuity locked ward for patients.



Daniel S. Lee thrives in the intersection of the arts and spirituality. His work involves redefining the roles of sacred and secular music with regards to their intention, function, and venue. Praised by *The New York Times* as "soulful" and "ravishing," he performs as a period violinist and leader with various ensembles throughout the United States and Europe, including his own, the Sebastians. He currently serves as the concertmaster for the Providence Baroque Orchestra (RI) and the resident baroque orchestra at the Washington National Cathedral (DC). He performs on various historical instruments and fosters ongoing collaborative research with luthier Karl Dennis (Warren, RI) and bowmaker David Hawthorne (Waltham, MA). When not traveling and performing, he splits his time between Willard, MO, where he pastors a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation, and New Haven, CT, where he teaches early music at the Yale School of Music. Born in Chicago and raised in Seoul, South Korea, and in New York City, Daniel is equally (un)fluent in Korean and in English. He identifies himself as ethnically a New Yorker. He enjoys learning different languages and cultures, and is a student of various ancient languages.

danielslee.com



Violist **Kyle Miller** made his concerto debut in 2005 with the Reading (Pennsylvania) Symphony Orchestra as "the dog" in P.D.Q. Bach's *Canine Cantata, Wachtet Arf!* After that watershed performance, Kyle went on to study at the New England Conservatory, the Eastman School of Music, and the Juilliard School, where he received Master of Music degrees in both viola performance and historical performance. A member of ACRONYM and Diderot String Quartet, Kyle also has appeared onstage with A Far Cry, the American Classical Orchestra, Apollo's Fire, the English Concert, Handel and Haydn Society, the Knights, New York Baroque Incorporated, Opera Lafayette, the Sebastians, Seraphic Fire, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Teatro Nuovo, TENET, The Thirteen, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, Upper Valley Baroque Orchestra, and the Washington National Cathedral Baroque Orchestra. Kyle performs regularly at the Carmel Bach Festival and the Staunton Music Festival; and as a member of Diderot String Quartet, he has served as a guest artist and coach at Oberlin College's Baroque Performance Institute. In 2017 and 2018, Kyle wore a wig and frock coat on Broadway, where he performed in a run of Claire van Kampen's play *Farinelli and the King*. In his spare time, Kyle enjoys playing card and board games and eating pizza by the slice.



Charlie Reed is a cellist, gambist, and educator based in New York. He is a founding member of Nuova Pratica, a collective of historical composers and improvisers, and La Forza delle Stelle Baroque Orchestra. His festival appearances include Blue Hill Bach Festival in Blue Hill, Maine and Dans les Jardins de William Christie in Thiré, France, and he can also be heard in many groups in and around New York City. He is a graduate of Juilliard's Historical Performance program, where he was the school's first combined baroque cello/gamba major. Additionally, he is a certified Suzuki

Cello instructor, and teaches cello to students of all ages at the Diller-Quaile School and Lindeblad School of Music.



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 was among the

last generation to study 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. He subsequently received a master's degree from the Juilliard School's Historical Performance Program in 2014 and prior to specializing in historical performance he received a bachelor's degree in modern flute performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music. In 2022 and 2023, David performed with the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Handel & Haydn Society, the Sebastians, TENET, Early Music New York, New York Baroque Incorporated, Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity, Clarion Orchestra, Four Nations Ensemble, ARTEK, Washington Bach Consort, Mercury Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonie Austin, Musica Angelica, 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

Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, where he earned praise for his "delicate elegance and rambunctious spirit" (*Twin Cities Pioneer Press*). 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.



Australian violist **Alissa Smith** spent five years as the violist of the award-winning Canberra String Quartet, which included a two-year residency with the Emerson String Quartet at the Hartt School of Music. Her tenure with the Canberra String Quartet included appearances at the Park City, Aspen, Bravo! Colorado, and Steamboat Springs Music Festivals, as

well as recitals at Carnegie Hall, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and the Berkshire Chamber Music Series. She continued her studies in New York City at the Juilliard School, where she served as a teaching fellow. A versatile freelancer, Alissa has appeared at the Ravinia Festival with the Knights Chamber Orchestra and toured Australia and North America with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. She has performed with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Sarasota Opera, Klangforum Wien, and the American and Houston Symphony Orchestras. Chamber music appearances include the Costa Rican International Chamber Music Festival, Lincoln Center's Beethoven Festival, Carmel Bach Festival, and the Staunton Music Festival. International performances include the Sydney

Festival with Lou Reed and the Istanbul International Jazz Festival supporting Antony and the Johnsons.



Jessica Troy wears a variety of freelance hats. Ensembles with which she regularly performs include: Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, the Sebastians, New York Baroque Incorporated, Orchestra of St. Luke's, New York City Opera, Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, and Mark Morris Dance Group Music Ensemble. She can be heard on the

Marlboro Festival's 50th anniversary CD in György Kurtág's *Microludes* for string quartet, which she prepared with the composer. She has subbed and had her own chair on numerous Broadway shows (ranging from *Porgy & Bess* to *Tootsie*) and played on many film scores (most recently *Joker* and *Little Women*). She has recorded quartet tracks for Lou Reed and Ani DiFranco, performed on television with Renée Fleming and Whitney Houston, and on film with David Byrne.



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 Baroque Orchestra, New York Baroque Incorporated, the Sebastians,

and 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.



Mandy Wolman is a member of Tempesta di Mare and the Bach Collegium Orchestra in Philadelphia. She also performs regularly with the Washington Cathedral Baroque Orchestra, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Portland Bach Experience, Spire Ensemble, and The Thirteen. She has been guest faculty at Curtis Institute and Apple Hill Chamber Music Festival.

She has a Bachelors Degree in performance from Oberlin Conservatory and Master Courses in Flamenco Dancing.

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If this music moves you, please consider making a donation— no amount is too small. You can give online at sebastians.org/support, or by mailing a check made out to “Sebastian Chamber Players” to 163 Saint Nicholas Avenue, #2H, New York, NY 10026. **Thank you.**

THANK YOU

The Sebastians would like to thank the generous donors who have supported our 2023–24 activities so far, as well as our volunteers and board of directors. We couldn't do it without you!

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** This list up-to-date as of
August 29, 2023. Please forgive
any errors or omissions.*

Thanks as well to all who supported us throughout last season—we are grateful for your participation in our music-making and are thrilled to be bringing you a new year of baroque music.

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This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



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