



 *the*
SEBASTIANS

THE ITALIAN BACH / THE FRENCH BACH

Saturday, February 17, 2024 at 5pm / Sunday, February 18, 2024 at 5pm
Saint Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church, New York City

WELCOME

Welcome to our Bach Mini-Festival, a unique blend of solo violin brilliance and collaborative artistry! Nicholas takes the spotlight this weekend, interpreting Bach's complete solo violin repertoire, while Daniel and I offer complementary pieces from other influential composers of Bach's time and before.

Bach names three of his solo violin works "sonatas," an Italian term, and calls the other three "partitas," a French term—but his approach is so singular, you'd be forgiven for thinking the style of each of them was simply "Bach." We've concocted this weekend of music with the aim of teasing out those two sides of Bach's musical personality. While Nicholas brings us *inside* the intricacies of Bach's magnificent solo works, Daniel and I will explore *outside* of Bach, highlighting some of his contemporaries and predecessors who set the stage for his brilliance.

For Saturday's Italian-focused approach, we look to the past. Bach's sonatas incorporate elements of the Italian church and chamber sonatas, but we begin with music from before those structures had developed, with sonatas by Biber and Leonarda—free-flowing, rhapsodic works, light-hearted in comparison to Bach. Storace's *Ciaccona* is a romp

through the fields, and Pandolfi's *Adagio* is the *digestivo* at the end of a satisfying meal.

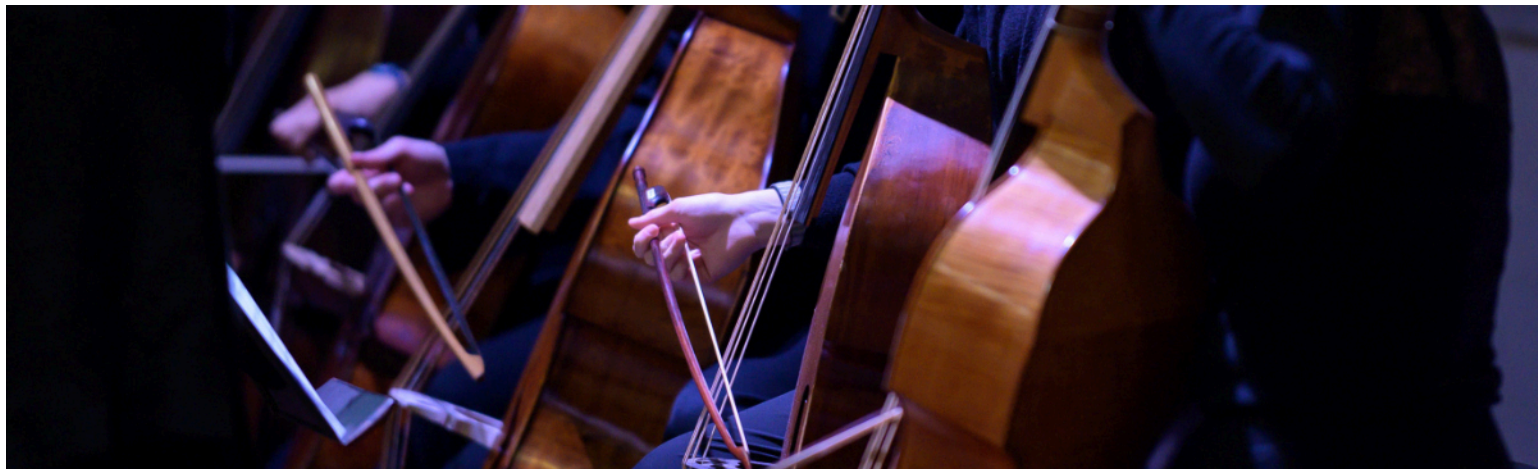
On Sunday, to complement Bach's towering partitas from a French perspective, we are dividing one of Jacquet de La Guerre's sonatas in half. Jacquet's musical style is also an Italian-French *mélange*, but in a completely different way from Bach's. Whereas Bach adds French dance forms and ornamentation to German counterpoint and complexity, Jacquet blends delicious French harmonies and Italian sequences. The meandering structure of her sonatas recalls the freeform nature of the early sonata form. Sunday's *digestif* is a finale by Senaillé, exuberantly Italian.

We think a lot about how to highlight the monumental baroque works we idolize—and I do think sometimes they can be too large to comprehend in one sitting, like trying to take in the whole Met Museum in an afternoon. Hopefully, these juxtapositions help to highlight the interconnectedness of musical voices across different minds and times. Thank you for joining us for this celebration of Bach's legacy!

— Jeffrey Grossman, *Artistic Director*



The 24 Violins, March 2023



ABOUT THE BACH

I remember waking early, around 5:30 am, rising to practice the Bach G minor Adagio before school. I would have been in sixth or seventh grade. This was not my first solo Bach, but the memory endures. Time spent with this music is special. It beckons you to journey with it, whispering a musician's secret. "The journey is the reward." The process of spending time with the music, its prayers and its precepts, teaches you how to think, how to hear.

It's admittedly a strange thing to perform these six pieces in a single weekend, and certainly not a very "historically informed" thing to do. They are likely not meant for our modern concert stage, and definitely not meant for performance as we think of it in 2024. But they are the pieces that whispered to me, "become a baroque violinist." And they are also the pieces that have always asked me to make something—a story, a poem, a sketch. The A minor Sonata reaches out and says, "make a poem about an old bard." The D minor Partita, with its strange, wonderful, sprawling *Ciaccona*, is an enigmatic monument, rife with hidden cruciform messages of transfiguration. The G minor Sonata demands to be heard as a fiery mythical story. The B minor Partita is a labyrinth. The E major Partita looks forever into the future, inviting us to dance. And the C major Sonata is truly a cathedral in the sky.

These pieces are Bach's way of showing a violinist what the violin can be. They are Bach's way of showing us how music behaves with a violin in his hand. How do we behave, in the 21st century, with such music in our hands, heads, and hearts?

Bach was criticized during his lifetime, by Scheibe for example, for musical notation that was

too florid, too ornamented, too prescribed. The thorny complexity of musical thought in the polyphonic fugues, the unsettling harmonic forays of the adagios; all to say that Bach was indeed the third choice of the Leipzig Town Council for the position of Thomaskantor. Far from the urbane Telemann or the charming Graupner, Bach is writing for himself or God or nobody at all. So naturally the music whispers, "come, listen, take this journey."

I'm so grateful to all of my teachers, mentors, students, family, and friends, all of whom have helped, encouraged, challenged, and even whispered to me throughout my own lifelong travels with the solo violin works of J.S. Bach.



Inspired by each of Bach's 27 movements, I have created 27 pastel paintings using a mixture of soft pastels, hard pastels, sanded paper, and alcohol. The pieces range in size from 16x12 to 16x48. Apart from the "Double" portions of the B minor Partita (which are created by applying digital filters to existing pastel pieces), each of Bach's movements is "represented" by an original pastel painting.

Bach's musical motives, characters, key areas, compositional structures, and hidden messages all serve as generative sources in this series. I conceive of each work as an entry in a "musician's sketchbook," this exhibit serving as a way of sharing my musical interpretive process rather than asserting any professional identity as a visual artist.

— Nicholas DiEugenio, January 2024

THE ITALIAN BACH

Saturday, February 17

**HEINRICH IGNAZ FRANZ
VON BIBER**
(1644–1704)

Sonata no. 1, "The Annunciation"
C. 90 from *Mystery (Rosary) Sonatas* (?1674)
Praeludium
Variatio — Aria allegro — Variatio — adagio
Finale

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685–1750)

Sonata no. 2 in A minor for solo violin, BWV 1003



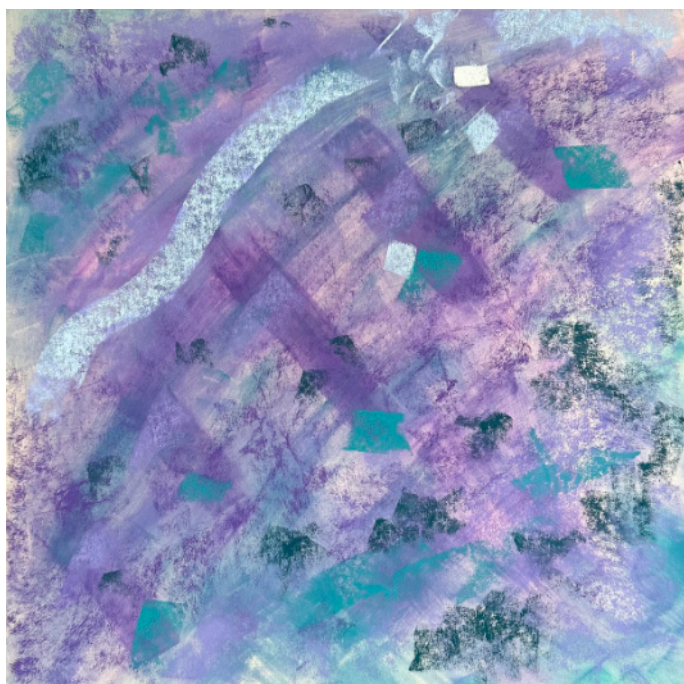
I. Grave

Earth Study



II. Fuga

States of Union



III. Andante

Feel Free



IV. Allegro

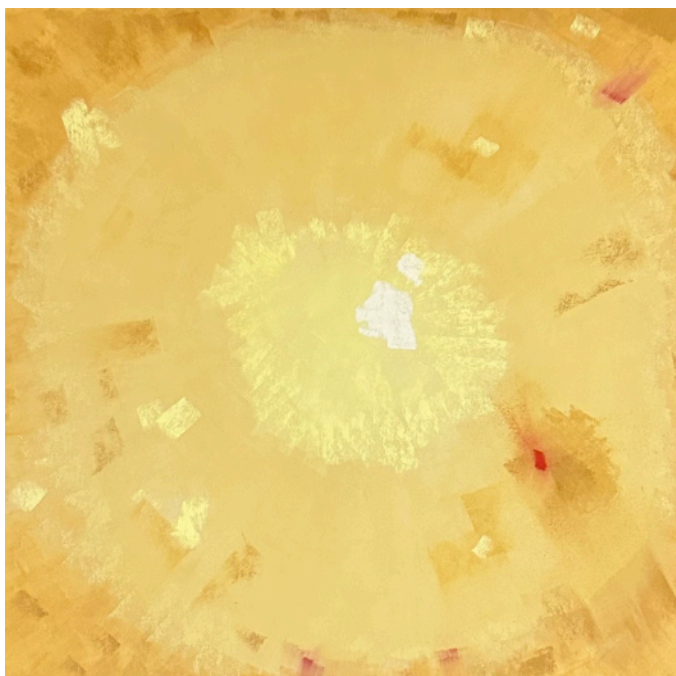
Feuerfest

ISABELLA LEONARDA
(1620–1704)

Sonata duodecima for violin and continuo
from *Sonate...*, op. 16 (Bologna, 1693)
Adagio – Allegro, e presto – Vivave, e largo –
Spiritoso – [] – Aria, allegro – Veloce

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Sonata no. 3 in C major for solo violin, BWV 1005



I. Adagio

Auroras



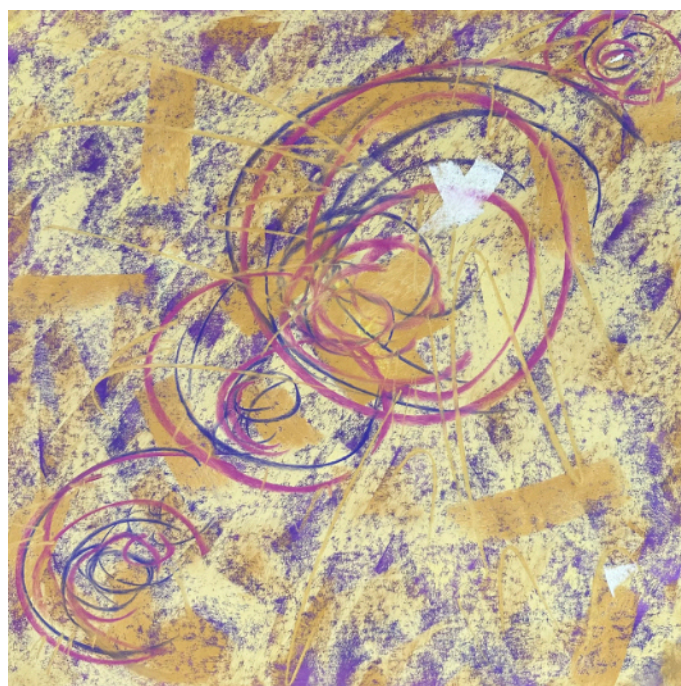
II. Fuga

Revere It



III. Largo

Spindrift



IV. Allegro assai

Recess

BERNARDO STORACE

(fl. mid-17th cent.)

Ciaccona for solo harpsichord

from *Selva di varie composizioni d'intavolatura per cimbalo ed organo* (Venice, 1664)

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Sonata no. 1 in G minor for solo violin, BWV 1001



I. Adagio

Koko Tribute



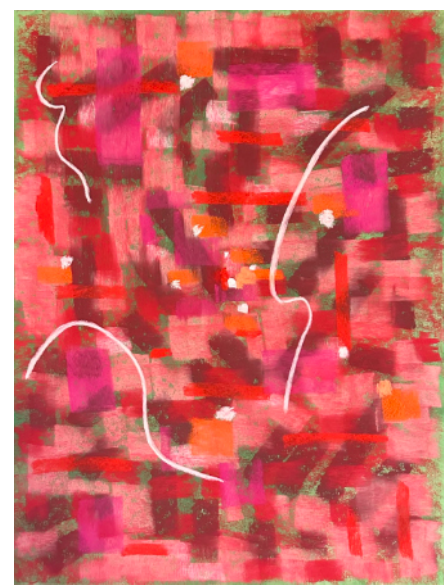
II. Fuga

Aerial View



III. Siciliana

Narcissus



IV. Presto

Centrifuge

GIOVANNI ANTONIO

PANDOLFI MEALLI

(fl. 1660–69)

Adagio, from Sonata *La Castella* for violin and continuo

op. 3, no. 4 (Innsbruck, 1660)

THE SEBASTIANS



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 unconduted *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



MUSICIANS



Violinist **Nicholas DiEugenio** has been heralded for his “excellent...evocative” playing (*The New York Times*), full of “rapturous poetry” (*American Record Guide*). Nicholas is in-demand as a soloist, chamber musician, and ensemble leader, creating powerful shared experiences in music ranging from early baroque to contemporary

commissions. A core member of the Sebastians, a period group hailed as “topnotch” by the *New Yorker* and “sharp-edged and engaging” by *The New York Times*, Nicholas also performs and records with pianist and wife Mimi Solomon. Their award-winning duo project “Unraveling Beethoven” comprises a full cycle of the Beethoven violin sonatas along with response works from composers Tonia Ko, Robert Honstein, Jesse Jones, Allen Anderson, and D.K. Garner.

His Musica omnia recording of the complete Schumann violin sonatas with Chi-Chen Wu on fortepiano was named one of the Top 10 albums of 2015 by The Big City. His August 2017 release on the New Focus label with Mimi Solomon, critically lauded as “a touching, committed tribute” (*I Care If You Listen*), is an homage to the late Pulitzer Prize-winner Steven Stucky. The disc features Stucky’s Sonata for violin and piano, two new works by Stucky’s students Jesse Jones and Tonia Ko, and the previously unrecorded Violin Sonata of Robert Palmer.

A two-time prize-winner at the prestigious Fischhoff competition, Nicholas is passionately committed to collaboration, and has performed chamber music with Laurie Smukler, Joel Krosnick, Joseph Lin, Peter Salaff, and Ani Kavafian, as well as members of the Meta4 Quartet. As a baroque and classical violinist, he has performed with violinists Ingrid Matthews and Aislinn Nosky, as well as members of Tafelmusik, the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque, and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He is also an alumnus of the Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, where he was deeply influenced by the musicianship of pianist Seymour Lipkin. At the same time, Nicholas also strives to incorporate musical elements from some of his favorite rock icons such as Jimi Hendrix, Anthony Kiedis, and Thom Yorke.

Rooted in a deeply compassionate approach to teaching, Nicholas is currently Associate Professor of Violin at UNC Chapel Hill, and is co-artistic director of MYCO, a non-profit chamber music organization for middle and high school students. Formerly Assistant Professor of Violin at the Ithaca College School of Music, Nicholas continues as a faculty member of the Kinhaven Music School in Vermont during the summers. Nicholas holds

degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music (BM, MM) and the Yale School of Music (DMA, AD), and he performs on a baroque violin made by Karl Dennis in 2011, and also on a 1734 violin made by Dom Nicolò Amati.

nicholasdieugenio.com @dieu_violin



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



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 NYC, Daniel is equally (un)fluent in Korean and in English. He identifies himself as ethnically a New Yorker. He enjoys learning about different cultures and is a student of ancient languages.

danielslee.com

THE FRENCH BACH

Sunday, February 18

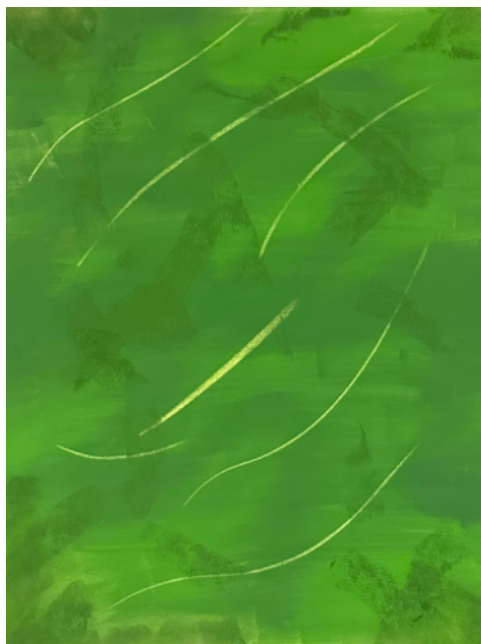
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685–1750)

Partita no. 3 in E major for solo violin, BWV 1006



I. Preludio

Bachiana



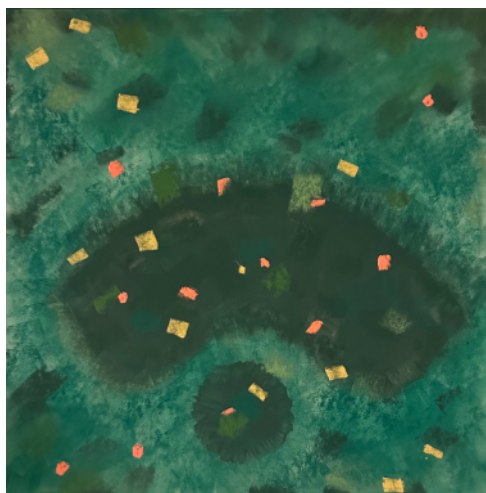
II. Loure

Verdant Daydreams



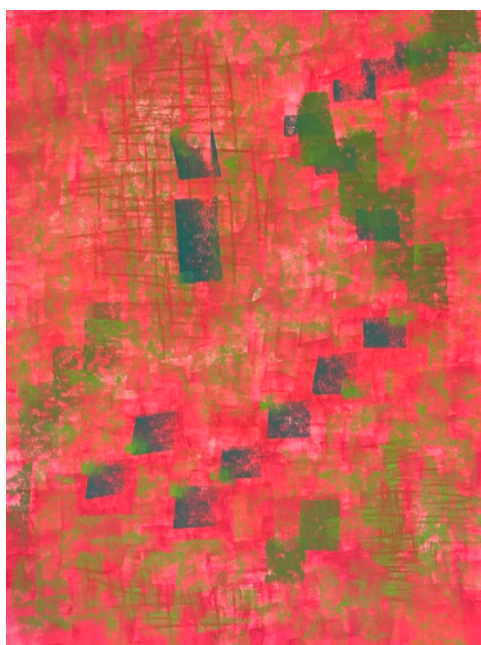
III. Gavotte

SoliDeoSoliDeo



IV. Menuets

baBIPchoo



V. Bourrée

Stomp Stomp!



VI. Gigue

Bright Future

**ELISABETH JACQUET
DE LA GUERRE**
(1627–93)

Sonata no. 6 in A major (1707) for violin and continuo

Allemande

Presto

Adagio

[]

Aria

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Partita no. 1 in B minor for solo violin, BWV 1002



I. Allemande

Windswept



II. Allemande Double

Fiddlehead



III. Corrente

Fanciful



IV. Corrente Double

Rundown



V. Sarabande

Hope



VI. Sarabande Double

Uplift



VII. Tempo di Borea

Break it Down



VIII. Tempo di Borea Double

In Case of Fire

**ELISABETH JACQUET
DE LA GUERRE**

Sonata no. 6 in A major (*continued*)
Adagio
Presto – Adagio
Aria

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Partita no. 2 in D minor for solo violin, BWV 1004



I. Allemanda

Breakstyle



II. Corrente

Shufflecross



III. Sarabanda

Fallback



IV. Giga

Ale For a Year



The Complete J.S. Bach for Solo Violin, April 2017



V. Ciaccona



Crux

JEAN BAPTISTE SENAILLÉ
(c. 1688–1730)

Allegro, from Sonata op. 4, no. 4 for violin and continuo
(Paris, 1721)

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The Sebastians are a 501(c)3 non-profit.

Producing these concerts is a labor of love that your tax-deductible gifts help make possible. With your support, we can bring these baroque treasures to life and share them with audiences around New York and across the country.

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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Alfred & Jane Ross

** This list up-to-date as of February 7, 2024. Please forgive any errors or omissions.*

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David Starr
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The Sebastians 2023–24 concerts are made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

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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