BACH FROM THE DEAD

Saturday, October 31 at 5pm
Good Shepherd–Faith Presbyterian Church, New York City

The Four Seasons, January 2024 (Photo by David Payne)
Projection design by Hannah Fox, based on original photography by Ramuel Galarza and curated by Grace Copeland

Program

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685–1750)
arr. Jeffrey Grossman

Toccata and Fugue in D minor
BWV 565 (1703–7?)

JEAN-FÉRY REBEL
(1666–1747)

Chaos
from *Les elémens* (1737)

GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN
(1681–1767)

Ouverture Don Quixotte a 4, TWV 55:G10
Ouverture
Le réveil de Quixotte [Quixote's Awakening]
Son attaque des moulins à vent
[His Attack on the Windmills]
Ses soupirs amoureux après la Princesse Dulcinée
[His Lovesick Sighs after Princess Dulcinea]
Sanche Panse [Sancho Panza]
Le couché de Quixotte [Quixote's Bedtime]

CARSON COOMAN
(b. 1982)

Totentanz, op. 1690 (Cambridge, MA, 2026)
world premiere

JEAN-PHILIPPE RAMEAU
(1683–1764)

L'orage [Storm]
from *Platée*, RCT 53 (Paris, 1749)

GIUSEPPE TARTINI
(1692–1770)

Violin Sonata in G minor
GT 2.g05; B.g5, "Devil's Trill" (Assisi, 1713? Padua, 1740s?)
Larghetto ma non troppo
Allegro moderato
Andante
Allegro assai – Andante – Allegro assai

ANTONIO VIVALDI
(1678–1741)

Adagio molto
from *The Four Seasons: Autumn*, RV 293 (Venice, 1725)

CARLO FARINA
(c. 1600–39)

Capriccio stravagante à 4 (Dresden, 1627)

VIVALDI

Sonata "La Folia," op. 1, no. 12, RV 63 (Venice, 1705)

Notes

What better excuse than Halloween to explore some of the stranger corners of the Baroque? Composers wrote storms, animal noises, drunken scenes, and music about imaginary adventures, often including instructions to the players about how to bring it all to life. Alongside these old pieces is a new work by Carson Cooman, written for the Sebastians and this program. We're also pleased to be debuting tonight original costumes by Stephanie Mae Fisher inspired by "classic" costume party vibes.

To begin: nothing screams Halloween like **Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D minor***. Is it the dramatic pauses, descending runs, parallel diminished-seventh chords? The improvisatory toccata, with abrupt changes of pace and texture, leads to a perpetual-motion fugue, before the toccata bursts back into the room for a final jump-scare. A single organist usually manages the drama, but tonight we'll perform the piece in an ensemble arrangement. For such a famous piece, its early history is surprisingly uncertain: Bach's manuscript is lost, and the principal surviving source is a copy by Johannes Ringk.

Jean-Féry Rebel's *Chaos* is more specific about what it represents. At the beginning, all seven notes of the D minor scale sound at once, with the ridiculous basso continuo figure 7/6/5/4/3/2/1. Rebel explained in his preface that he wanted to depict the confusion of earth, air, fire, and water before they separated into their proper places. The dissonance is startling even now, particularly if your expectation of French baroque music is a polite dance.

Rebel's chaos leads to **Cervantes's** "chaotic-good" knight-errant Don Quixote floundering all over the countryside, a story Telemann tells here entirely through instrumental music. The movement titles identify episodes from his adventures: waking up, attacking windmills, sighing over Dulcinea, and eventually going back to bed, with a movement for Sancho Panza along the way. Telemann vividly paints Quixote's personality, swinging quickly from energetic action to melodramatic pathos.

Carson Cooman's *Totentanz*, op. 1690, our new commission, reaches back to the medieval Dance of Death. As Cooman says, "the German Totentanz ('Dance of Death') tradition is a medieval allegorical concept and artistic motif that focuses on the universal nature of death." The piece revels in our mortality, but Cooman pokes fun at the seriousness with surprising rhythmic shifts and pauses, pizzicato interjections, and Addams Family-like harpsichord interludes. (After all, Sir Thomas Beecham did compare the harpsichord to "two skeletons copulating on a tin roof.") Our contemplation, such as it is, is cut short by the storm from **Rameau's *Platée***—rapid scales, repeated notes, and frantic activity across the ensemble.

Tartini's *Devil's Trill* comes with a story that is perhaps more famous than the sonata itself. According to the astronomer Jérôme Lalande, Tartini told him that he had dreamed of the devil playing the violin with astonishing skill. When he woke, Tartini tried to write down what he had heard, but found his own effort disappointing by comparison. Regardless of the story, we don't actually know when or how the sonata was composed. There is plenty of beautiful, lyrical playing before the notorious trills. Whatever the sonata's origins, the later alternation of quiet Andante passages and vigorous Allegro assai sections certainly conjures a devilish atmosphere.

Sleep scenes were a familiar feature of baroque stage works. In **Vivaldi's *Autumn***, too much wine is to blame, with the revellers asleep after their harvest celebrations. With somewhat unusual specificity, Vivaldi asks for muted strings and an arpeggiating harpsichord, and the harmonies can be surprisingly uneasy for a scene of people sleeping off a party.

Carlo Farina wakes us up with a cornucopia of instrumental oddities in his Capriccio stravagante, published in Dresden in 1627. Listen for the strings' imitation of other instruments as well as cats, dogs, and birds. Farina supplies detailed instructions: slide the left hand to make animal cries, change the bow's position around the bridge, or strike the strings with the wood of the bow. How many degrees does it take to successfully summon a barking dog or an argumentative cat?

We couldn't celebrate instrumental excess without **Vivaldi's *La Folia***, something of a signature piece for us. Published as the last sonata of his first collection, it uses a tune and harmonic pattern that many composers adapted for their own variations. The title means folly or madness, and we take that invitation seriously. After an evening of storms, devils, and imagined adventures, we end with music that needs no story to sound unhinged.

— Jeffrey Grossman, *Artistic Director*

Performers

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. His award-winning album *Unraveling Beethoven* with pianist and wife Mimi Solomon was released in 2018 by New Focus Recordings, and other recordings include the *Complete Violin Sonatas of Robert Schumann* (Musica Omnia) as well as a tribute to Pulitzer prizewinner Steven Stucky (New Focus). Nicholas is a core member of the Sebastians as well as Associate Professor of Music at UNC Chapel Hill. Nicholas plays a J.B. Vuillaume violin (1835) as well as a Karl Dennis baroque violin (2011).

nicholasdieugenio.com @dieu_violin

Stephanie Mae Fisher is a costume designer, maker, deep thinker, and artist. She holds an MFA in costume design from the University of Texas at Austin, and has created work for dance, stage plays, opera, and musical theatre in many parts of the country. Most recently, she has assisted on the Broadway productions of *Stranger Things: The First Shadow* and *New York, New York*, in addition to numerous Off-Broadway and Regional projects. Her regional theatre work includes stints at Washington National Opera (Kennedy Center), Signature Theatre (Virginia), Great Lakes Theater (Ohio), Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival. She has been the costume shop manager at New York Stage and Film and Peterborough Players. stephaniemaefisher.com

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 guest music director and performer with Tenet Vocal Artists, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and 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. Jeffrey taught early music performance practice for eight years at Yale and now teaches at Juilliard. He is the creator of the specialist tuning app Fine Tuna.

jeffreygrossman.com

Daniel Lee leads an interdisciplinary career as a performer, scholar, preacher, and teacher. Praised for his "fleet-fingered, passionate… soulful performance" (*The New York Times*), he is the founding director of the Sebastians, an award-winning period ensemble based in New York City. He frequently performs as a soloist and leader with Early Music Missouri, the Kansas City Baroque Consortium, and the Providence Baroque Orchestra. He plays on modern replicas of Cremonese violins by luthier Karl Dennis and a rare 1770 Florentine violin in its original setup by Giovanni Battista Gabrielli. In addition to historical violins, he also performs on the violino piccolo and violoncello da spalla. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA), he has served churches and organizations in Connecticut, Missouri, and New York. He strives to explore the intersection of arts and spirituality, where creativity can inspire harmony in human society. He teaches early music at Yale University. 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, *Wachet Arf!* Afterward, Kyle studied at the New England Conservatory, the Eastman School of Music, and the Juilliard School. A member of ACRONYM and Diderot String Quartet, Kyle also has performed with A Far Cry, American Classical Orchestra, American Contemporary Music Ensemble, English Concert, Handel and Haydn Society, Irish Baroque Orchestra, the Knights, New York Baroque Incorporated, Opera Lafayette, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Relic Ensemble, Ruckus, the Sebastians, Seraphic Fire, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Tenet Vocal Artists, The Thirteen, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, Upper Valley Baroque Orchestra, and Washington National Cathedral Baroque Orchestra. Kyle has performed at Carmel Bach Festival, Nebraska Crossroads Music Festival, Staunton Music Festival, and Tucson Baroque Music Festival. In 2017/2018, Kyle performed in a Broadway run of Claire van Kampen's *Farinelli and the King*.

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.

Lutenist **Dani Zanuttini-Frank** has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician in North and South America, Europe, and Asia. He has recently performed with Piffaro, A Far Cry, Tenet, and Tiny Glass Tavern, and presented a recital with Sophie Michaux at the 2026 Urbino Festival di Musica Antica. He most recently completed a Graduate Diploma in Historical Performance at Juilliard, studying with Charles Weaver and Daniel Swenberg. He completed his Bachelors and Masters at Yale, where he studied classical guitar and music theory. Outside of performance, Dani teaches and researches historical music theory: he is currently pursuing a PhD in music theory at CUNY. Dani is particularly interested in historical pedagogical methods, such as solfeggio and partimento, and their spread across musical cultures.

5 Glorious Programs

26/27 Season

October 17	**Vivaldi Concerto Festival**
November 6/7	**Circle of Life**
January 2	**Best of the Brandenburgs**
January 29/30	**Bach by Candlelight**
May 21/22	**Style Wars: Musical Rivalry Gets Serious**

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Bach's St. John Passion	Mar. 4–5
In the Course of Love & Joy	Apr. 9–10
Light as Air	May 7–8

Tickets and more information
www.tenet.nyc

Thank You

The Sebastians are a 501(c)(3) non-profit. If this music moves you, please consider making a donation—no amount is too small. You can give online at sebastians.org/support. The Sebastians would like to thank all of the generous donors who have supported our NYC concerts over the past year, in addition to our volunteers, staff, and board of directors. We couldn't do it without you!

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NYC Cultural Affairs

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

About 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*). The Sebastians were named *Best Orchestra* by *The New York Times* for their unconducted *Messiah* with Tenet Vocal Artists in 2018, and their *St. Matthew Passion* was called "shattering" and "a performance of uncommon naturalness and transparency" (*NYT*).

The Sebastians are known for definitive performances of core baroque repertoire—J.S. Bach masterpieces including the *Brandenburg Concerti*, the *Mass in B minor*, the *Passions of St. Matthew and John*—as well as imaginative, boldly original programs of their own devising, moving fluidly between intimate chamber and large-scale orchestral works. Recent seasons have included dozens of originally conceived programs, including collaborations with poets, photographers, dancers, and actors; premieres of newly commissioned works; a musical installation in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine; and programs that trace how baroque style evolved and migrated across borders, courts, and centuries.

2026–27 NYC Concert Series

CONCERTOS!
Saturday, October 3 at 5pm

BACH FROM THE DEAD
Saturday, October 31 at 5pm

CANTATA CANTATA
Saturday, November 21 at 5pm

VIOLIN VIOLIN VIOLIN
Saturday, February 6 at 5pm

BAROQUE IN BLOOM
Saturday, April 17 at 5pm

DANCE ACROSS BORDERS
Saturday, May 8 at 5pm

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