



FORCES *of* Nature

WITH KATI DEBRETZENI, DIRECTOR & VIOLIN
Vivaldi, Four Seasons / Rebel, Les Éléments

Victoria, January 10, 2020 / Nanaimo, January 11, 2020

We acknowledge that we make this music on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen-speaking people and of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

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Programme*

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) – *The Four Seasons*

***Spring*, Violin Concerto in E major Op. 8 no. 1**
Allegro • Largo • Allegro 'Danza pastorale'

Jean-Féry Rebel (1666–1747) – *Cahos et Les éléments*

*Le Chaos • Loure • Chaconne • Ramage • Rossignols •
Rondeau 'Air pour l'Amour' • Caprice • Sicilienne • Tambourins I & II*

Intermission

***Summer*, Violin Concerto in G minor Op. 8 no. 2**
Allegro non molto • Adagio e piano – Presto e forte • Presto

***Autumn*, Violin Concerto in F major Op. 8 no. 3**
Allegro • Adagio molto • Allegro 'Caccia'

***Winter*, Violin Concerto in F minor Op. 8 no. 4**
Allegro non molto • Largo • Allegro

*This concert is sponsored by Wendy & James Russell.

VICTORIA BAROQUE – THE PLAYERS

Kati Debretzeni, guest director & violin soloist†
Paul Luchkow, violin
Elyssa Lefurgey-Smith, violin
Chloe Kim, violin‡
Christi Meyers, violin
Kathryn Wiebe, violin
Tyson Doknjas, violin

†sponsored by Sylvia Calder & Robin MacLeod
(Victoria) and by Jackie Clabon, Ross Fraser,
Louise Hamilton, Barbara & Ken Lyall (Nanaimo)

‡Victoria concert only

Mieka Michaux, viola§
Joanna Hood, viola
Martin Bonham, cello
Natalie Mackie, violone
Michael Jarvis, harpsichord
Soile Stratkauskas, flute¶
Lana Betts, flute
Katrina Russell, bassoon**

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PROGRAMME NOTES

Both of the masterworks on tonight's programme depict transformations of nature in great imaginative detail.

Jean-Féry Rebel and **Antonio Vivaldi** were both celebrated violinists and composers in their own right, and innovatively cultivated existing musical forms in creative, even revolutionary new ways. Rebel was a child prodigy violinist and, later, a court composer for Louis XIV. Rebel composed many outstanding dance suites to accompany the ballet, of which his last work, *Cahos et les éléments*, was boldest and most innovative. According to Rebel the opening movement entitled "Chaos" describes "that confusion which reigned among the elements before the moment, when subjected to invariable laws, they took their ordained places in the order of nature." It begins with the first-ever tone cluster in western art music: the opening chord includes every note of the D minor scale. The four elements gradually emerge from this chaos: first *Water*, demonstrated by fluid melodic lines, then *Fire* in the form of fierce gestures from the violins, *Air* in the form of long trills from the piccolo, and *Earth*, demonstrated by solid slurred figures in the bass section. By the end of the opening number a firm tonal grounding is found: the four elements and the order of the world have been established. This is followed by the second movement, a loure, which plays with the contrast between *Earth* and *Water*, the earthly theme being played by the strings and water represented by the flutes. Following the loure, the music bursts into a joyous chaconne demonstrating Fire. Rebel's imaginative use of different instrumental colours is also notable in his use of piccolo and flutes and violin accompaniment in the fourth and fifth movements—*Ramage (air)* and *Rossignols* ("nightingales")—and the exquisite bassoon solo in the second Tambourin.

Vivaldi first trained as a priest but, very soon after his ordination in 1703, turned his back on the church and devoted himself fully to music. He held a position as violin teacher and music director at the Pietà in Venice, an orphanage and music institution for girls and women that produced many virtuoso musicians. Vivaldi wrote over 500 concertos in his lifetime, more than 200 for solo violin.

His *Four Seasons* has remained amongst the most beloved works in the western classical music tradition since they were first published in 1725. Entitled *La Quattro Stagioni* they were published together with eight other concerti in an opus titled *Il Cimento dell'Armonia* ("The Trial of Harmony and Invention"). The four concerti of the Four Seasons were accompanied by four sonnets, probably written by Vivaldi himself. The poems were included in excerpts within the individual instrumental parts to indicate the poetic idea each passage depicts: the concerti were true programme music in highest detail! With great imagination, Vivaldi created musical images for the birdsong and murmuring streams of the spring; the heat, bothersome insects and roaring thunderstorms of the summer; the drunken villagers that slumber after a boozy harvest festival; the autumnal hunting party with horns and dogs chasing after a poor wild beast; the shivering and rattling of teeth in winter weather; the rainfall outside the window; and playful sliding and falling on ice.

Soile Stratkauskas

THE FOUR SEASONS SONNETS

SPRING

Allegro: *Springtime is upon us. The birds celebrate her return with festive song and murmuring streams are softly caressed by the breezes. Thunderstorms, those heralds of Spring, roar, casting their dark mantle over heaven, then they die away to silence and the birds take up their charming songs once more.*

Largo: *On the flower-strewn meadow, with leafy branches rustling overhead, the goat-herd sleeps, his faithful dog beside him.*

Allegro 'Danza pastorale': *Led by the festive sound of rustic bagpipes, nymphs and shepherds lightly dance beneath the brilliant canopy of spring.*

SUMMER

Allegro non molto: *Under a hard season, fired up by the sun, languishes man, languishes the flock and burns the pine. We hear the cuckoo's voice; then sweet songs of the turtledove and finch are heard. Soft breezes stir the air, but threatening the North Wind sweeps them suddenly aside. The shepherd trembles, fearing violent storms and his fate.*

Adagio e piano – Presto e forte: *The fear of lightning and fierce thunder robs his tired limbs of rest, as gnats and flies buzz furiously around.*

Presto: *Alas, his fears were justified. The Heavens thunder and roar and with hail cut the head off the wheat and damages the grain.*

AUTUMN

Allegro: *Celebrates the peasant, with song and dance, the pleasure of a bountiful harvest. And fired up by Bacchus' liquor, many end their revelry in sleep.*

Adagio molto: *Everyone is made to forget their cares and to sing and dance by the air, which is tempered with pleasure and by the season that invites so many, many out of their sweetest slumber to fine enjoyment.*

Allegro 'Caccia': *The hunters emerge at the new dawn, and with horns and dogs and guns depart upon their hunting. The beast flees and they follow its trail; terrified and tired of the great noise of guns and dogs, the beast, wounded, threatens languidly to flee, but harried, dies.*

WINTER

Allegro non molto: *To tremble from cold in the icy snow, in the harsh breath of a horrid wind; to run, stamping one's feet every moment, our teeth chattering in the extreme cold.*

Largo: *Before the fire to pass peaceful, contented days while the rain outside pours down.*

Allegro: *To walk on an icy path slowly and cautiously, for fear of tripping and falling, then go fast, slip, crash on the ground and, rising, hasten on across the ice lest it cracks up, to hear the chill north winds course through the locked and bolted doors, this is winter, which nonetheless brings its own delights.*

Photo Credit: Joe Plommer



KATI DEBRETZENI

Born in Transylvania, Kati studied the violin with Ora Shiran in Israel, and the Baroque violin with Catherine Mackintosh and Walter Reiter at the Royal College of Music in London.

Since the year 2000 she has led the English Baroque Soloists under the direction of Sir John Eliot Gardiner, and her playing can be heard on their recordings of the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage. In 2008 she was appointed as one of the leaders of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, with whom she has often appeared as soloist, directing and leading the orchestra in performances in the UK, Europe and the US.

Kati features as soloist on a recording of Vivaldi's Four Seasons with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, on two versions of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, one with the European Brandenburg Ensemble under Trevor Pinnock (Gramophone Award 2008), and the other with the English Baroque Soloists, and most recently, on a recording of Bach's violin

concertos with the English Baroque Soloists. She has recorded numerous chamber music CDs with the ensembles Florilegium, Ricordo and Trio Goya.

Over the last few years, Kati has been invited to direct various ensembles in Israel, Canada, Norway, Poland, Iceland and the UK. She currently teaches the Baroque and Classical violin at the Royal Conservatory of Music in The Hague.

Petit Baroque

This program, led by Victoria Baroque violinist Elyssa Lefurgey-Smith, gives young string players a unique opportunity to explore Baroque repertoire in a baroque chamber orchestra setting, using period instruments. Members of Petit Baroque work without a conductor, developing a high level of ensemble skills, period performance style as well as historical knowledge.

This coming spring, Petit Baroque is excited to join forces with the Victoria Conservatory Opera Studio to present a fully staged performance of Handel's opera *Xerxes*, led by the legendary baroque violinist Jeanne Lamon and cellist Christina Mahler.

For further information about Petit Baroque and audition material, please contact Elyssa Lefurgey-Smith, elyssals@gmail.com.



VICTORIA BAROQUE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: SOILE STRATKAUSKAS

Now in its ninth season, the Victoria Baroque presents dynamic, personal, and engaging performances of music from the Baroque and Classical periods. Playing on the instruments of the 18th century Victoria Baroque brings audiences closer to the sound world of the period. Victoria Baroque brings together early music specialists from Vancouver Island and beyond for explorations of chamber, orchestral, vocal and choral works. Invitations for guest performances have included Early Music Vancouver, Early Music Society of the Islands, Cowichan Symphony Society, Artspring, Denman Island Concerts, and Vancouver Island Chamber Music Festival. Victoria Baroque's debut CD, *Virtuosi of the Baroque* on Marquis Classics, was nominated for a Western Canadian Music Award in 2014.

Education and nurturing of emerging talent is close to Victoria Baroque's heart. Victoria Baroque has inspired local students and the public with baroque performance through concerts in schools, workshops and masterclasses, and the Baroque Summer Academy at the Victoria Conservatory of Music.



Photo Credit: Jan Gates



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Volunteer help is always welcome, too! To support us in any of these ways, please contact us at victoria-baroque@shaw.ca or 250-590-9770.



Evening Hymn

Saturday, March 21 at 7:30 pm
at St. John the Divine

Victoria Baroque with St. John's Chamber Singers

An intimate evening transporting listeners to the chapels, churches, and cathedrals of 17th and 18th century Europe. Transcendent motets, songs, and instrumental music by Purcell, Bach, Buxtehude, and Lotti.

Mystery Sonatas

Saturday, May 30 at 7:00 pm at St. John the Divine

Violinists Elyssa Lefurgey-Smith, Tyson Doknjas, Paul Luchkow, Christi Meyers, Kathryn Wiebe and Jeanne Lamon

A mystical, meditative, wondrous journey through Heinrich Biber's complete Mystery Sonatas. A violin sonata for each mystery of the rosary, each with its own 'scordatura' string tuning.

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