



Max Volbers

concert programs

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## about

As a recorder player, harpsichordist and increasingly also as a conductor, Max Volbers is one of the most versatile young musicians in the field of early music. Following the sound worlds of the 17th and 18th centuries, in which musicians naturally mastered several instruments, as a multi-instrumentalist he illuminates the repertoire of early music from very different perspectives. He also devotes himself to contemporary music and regularly works with composers on commissioned compositions. He studied at Mozarteum University Salzburg with Dorothee Oberlinger, Walter van Hauwe, Reinhard Goebel and Florian Birsak.

As a prizewinner of the Deutscher Musikwettbewerb, among others, he is a welcome guest at the Verbier Festival, the Heidelberger Frühling, the Sanssouci Music Festival, the Menuhin Festival Gstaad, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, the Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele and the Innsbruck Festwochen der Alten Musik. Based on the deep conviction that early music should not be reserved exclusively for the period instrument scene, he plays with ensembles such as Concerto Köln, Il Pomo d'Oro, La Cetra or the Concentus Musicus Wien as well as with “modern” orchestras such as the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, the Munich Philharmonic, the NDR Radiophilharmonie or the Musikkollegium Winterthur.

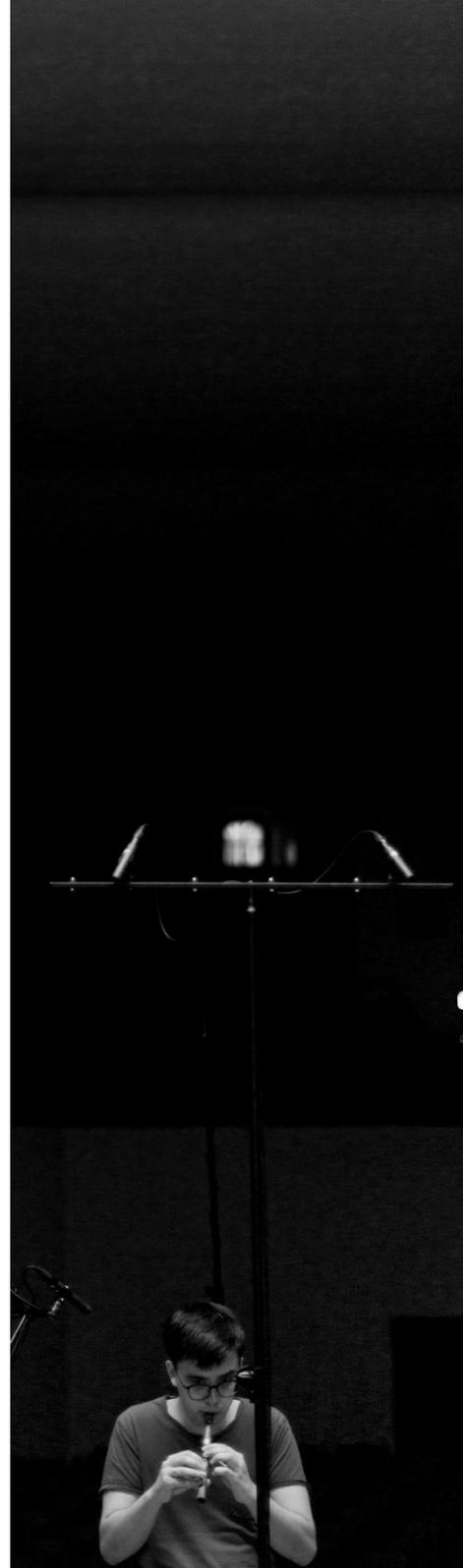


He has performed in major concert halls such as Carnegie Hall New York, Berlin Konzerthaus, Elbphilharmonie, KKL Luzern, Casa da Musica Porto, the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Konserthuset Stockholm, Vienna Konzerthaus, Philharmonie de Paris and the MÜPA Budapest.

In addition to his concert activities, Max teaches at the Mozarteum University Salzburg and at various masterclasses.

He has received great support from the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben, the Ernsting Foundation and the GWK Münster (Förderpreis Musik 2013 and GWK Cordes Scholarship). After numerous radio productions, his debut CD 'Whispers of Tradition' was released by GENUIN in October 2022, which was enthusiastically received by the specialist press. For this CD, he received the OPUS KLASSIK 2023 in the category Young Artist of the Year and the WELT am Sonntag Audience Award.

He has been under contract with Berlin Classics since 2024, and his new album "Foreign Masters" with harpsichordist Alexander von Heißen was released in September that year, followed by „Bach vs Scheibe“ in 2025.



## programs

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**as Solist**

## **„Wunderkammer“ Mr. Telemann’s Cabinet of Curiosities**

“Enough ideas for a lifetime” – that’s what Georg Philipp Telemann claimed one could gather in just a few days by listening to the musicians in the taverns of Eastern Europe.

But the reverse is equally true: his seemingly inexhaustible œuvre resembles a cabinet of curiosities – brimming with countless musical gems and oddities. French elegance meets the dramatic pathos of Italian opera; Polish folk music inspired him just as much as the natural world or the retelling of familiar stories. Time and again, his humorous, at times comical side comes to light – when he mimics chirping birds, lets a Harlequin leap about, has Don Quixote battle windmills, or gives voice to a hypochondriac lamenting in self-pity.

With Telemann’s Wunderkammer, Il Pomo d’Oro and recorder player Max Volbers delve into this rich and colourful world. They combine Telemann’s masterpieces – including his great Suite in a minor – with rarely performed works, a tragicomic pasticcio suite, and their own arrangements of melodies he jotted down on his travels. All of it is seasoned with Italian grandezza, French noblesse, and a generous dose of Telemann’s unmistakable humour.

**Max Volbers, recorder and direction**  
**Il Pomo d’Oro (1,1,1,1, harpsichord, lute, bassoon)**

**Works by Georg Philipp Telemann**  
***2 x 45 minutes, one intermission***

## **Concertare!**

They must have been truly gifted children: the girls of the Pietà, one of Venice's orphanages. Antonio Vivaldi taught there and composed many of his recorder concertos for the orphan girls—thus bequeathing to the “flauto dolce” a repertoire more daring and demanding than that of most of his contemporaries.

In addition to the well-known Concerti “per Flautino,” in which the recorder takes center stage as a soloist, he also enjoyed using the instrument as a chamber music partner in the “Concerti da camera.” Yet exploring Vivaldi's repertoire is often like a treasure hunt: the “Prete rosso” did not complete all of his recorder concertos...

**Max Volbers, recorder**

**Il Pomo d'oro (11 string players (3,3,2,2,1), oboe, bassoon, lute, harpsichord)**

**works by Antonio Vivaldi**

***2x 45 minutes, one intermission***

## Grand Tour

Anyone of any standing in the 18th century (and who could afford it!) would set out at least once on a “Grand Tour,” a journey through Europe. Georg Philipp Telemann, too, was fascinated by other nations even as a young man and composed numerous short melodies, which he dedicated to countries and regions throughout the known world of his time. He later reused many of these melodies in his orchestral works.

Concerto Köln, accompanied by recorder player Max Volbers, travels in the footsteps of Telemann and his contemporaries through old Europe—and beyond...

**Max Volbers, recorder**

**Concerto Köln (11 string players (3,3,2,2,1) plus harpsichord)**

**Works by Georg Philipp Telemann, Johann Sebastian Bach, Giuseppe Sammartini, Francesco Mancini and Antonio Vivaldi**

***2x 45 minutes, one intermission***

*This program is also available with an additional soloist, violinist Shunsuke Sato.*

## Foreign Masters

Virtuosos first - foreigners in! Migrants from Europe shaped the incomparably rich music scene in 18th century's most important capital: London. But it would not have existed without the skilled talents from the continent, musicians and composers - opulent operas, a myriad of new compositions that printers and publishers pounced on, dozens of public concerts and house concerts every day. Young recorder virtuoso Max Volbers, who was awarded the OPUS KLASSIK Young Artist of the Year in 2023, and harpsichordist Alexander von Heißen, who won the Bach Competition in 2022, bring a dazzling facet of the musical metropolis of London to life with "Foreign Masters".

So it was musical migration that gave English music a tremendously rich heritage: a fact that we cannot emphasise often enough in times of Brexit, isolationism and the suspicious view abroad...

**Max Volbers, recorder**  
**Alexander von Heißen, harpsichord**

**works by Georg Friedrich Händel, Arcangelo Corelli, Giuseppe Sammartini, James Paisible, Giovanni Carbonelli, Giuseppe Alberti, Johann Pepusch and others**

***2x 45 minutes, one intermission***  
*A harpsichord can be provided.*

***This program was released by Berlin Classics in 2024.***

## **Borrowed Bach**

In the 18th century, people didn't take intellectual property all that seriously. They were only too happy to borrow from the works of others—which was seen more as a compliment than a copyright infringement! Johann Sebastian Bach was no exception: he frequently borrowed from his colleagues, but above all from himself, and adapted existing pieces for different instrumentations.

A fact we're taking advantage of to bring works by Johann Sebastian Bach to the stage that he never actually wrote—but could very well have written...

**Max Volbers, recorder**  
**Kristian Bezuidenhout, harpsichord**

**Works by and after Johann Sebastian Bach**

***2x 45 minutes, one intermission***  
*A harpsichord can be provided.*

## **Adieu to the Pleasures**

The 17th century can certainly be regarded as the century in which emotions and passions found their way into music. “Adieu to the Pleasures” delves deep into the emotional worlds of early French and English Baroque music; from the heartbreak of John Dowland to nightingales in love in the works of Bousset and Couperin, and the occasional twinkle of the eye found in Robert Johnson, all the way to an abysmal longing for death...

**Anna Lucia Richter, mezzo soprano**  
**Max Volbers, recorder**  
**Luca Pianca, lute**

**Works by John Dowland, François Couperin, Robert Johnson, Michel Lambert, Jean-Baptiste de Bousset, Henry Purcell and others**

*2 x 45 minutes, one intermission*

## **Stravaganze archadiche**

When we think of Arcadia, we immediately picture a pastoral idyll, yet Arcadia is so much more: namely, an ideal world once believed to be lost, onto which humanity has projected its desire to live free from constraints since ancient times. “Stravaganze archadiche” is therefore a story of mythical creatures, pastoral idylls, lively dance and tavern music, and, of course, love—between people, but also for nature! We invite you on a journey through a variety of Arcadian landscapes, with English, Italian, and French flair.

**Max Volbers, recorder**

**Alfia Bakieva, violin**

**Teodoro Bau, viola da gamba**

**Arianna Radaelli, harpsichord**

**works by Claudio Monteverdi, Thomas Simpson, Nicola Matteis, Angelo Berardi, François Francoer, Andrea Falconiero and others**

***2x 45 minutes, one intermission***

***Optional without a break (app. 70 minutes)***

*A harpsichord can be provided*

## **Perfect Strangers**

What connects the legendary Frank Zappa to Baroque music? More than one might think: On the one hand, Zappa – whose extravagance and versatility made him impossible to pigeonhole – was not only a dazzling rock musician but also deeply interested in other art forms. In 1984, for instance, he recorded an album featuring works by his Baroque “alter ego,” Francesco Zappa. On the other hand, there are numerous points of contact between Baroque ostinato patterns and the improvisations over vamps in rock music.

“Perfect Strangers” brings together works by Frank Zappa with those of Baroque visionaries—thus uniting two worlds that could not be further apart and yet, time and again, come surprisingly close...

**Max Volbers, recorder**

**David Bergmüller, lute**

**Christoph Urbanetz, viola da gamba**

**Sebastian Wienand, harpsichord**

**works by Frank Zappa, Claudio Monteverdi, Isabella Leonarda,  
Arcangelo Corelli, Henry Purcell, Marco Uccellini and others**

***2x 45 minutes, one intermission***

***Optional without a break (app. 70 minutes)***

*A harpsichord can be provided*



**as musical director  
(maestro al Cembalo)**



## **Fatto per La Notte**

The night has inspired, captivated, and frightened people of the Baroque era in many ways. This program is dedicated to the theme of the night in all its facets: from sweet dreams and terrifying ghosts to the song of the nightingale and Shakespeare's „A Midsummer Night's Dream“, everything is truly represented here...

**Marie-Sophie Pollak, soprano**

**Il Pomo d'Oro**

**Max Volbers, recorder, harpsichord and direction**

**works by Henry Purcell, Antonio Vivaldi, Georg Friedrich Händel,  
Alessandro Scarlatti, Marc-Antoine Charpentier and others**

***2 x 45 minutes, one intermission***

## **Bach vs Scheibe**

“This great man would be the object of admiration for entire nations if he were more accessible, and if he did not rob his works of their naturalness through a bombastic and convoluted style, and obscure their beauty with excessive artifice.”

In his „Crischer Musikus“ of 1737, Johann Adolph Scheibe has little good to say about Johann Sebastian Bach: His vocal music is unsingable, he claims, because Bach places the same demands on the voice as he does on his own fingers—far too complex and not pleasant enough to the ear. The rhetorician Johann Abraham Birnbaum comes to Bach’s defense (possibly at Bach’s request), sparking a vitriolic and—for us today—highly revealing—and at times entertaining—publicly waged shitstorm.

Though dismissed with disdain by posterity as a Bach critic, Scheibe remains a composer who is often underestimated even today. In his defense, it should be noted that he praised Bach in the highest terms elsewhere—reason enough to let him have his say in this concert and allow the two sparring partners to engage in dialogue...

**Marie-Sophie Pollak, soprano**  
**Concerto Köln**  
**Max Volbers, harpsichord and direction**

***2 x 45 minutes, one intermission***

***This program has been released by Berlin Classics in 2025***

## **Scenes of Horror**

It seems to give Baroque opera librettists a wicked thrill to put their heroic characters through the wringer before they meet their end—sometimes gloriously, sometimes not—or, with a bit of luck, get to celebrate the opera's happy ending. There are virtually no limits to the creativity with which they maneuver their own characters into horrific, nightmarish scenarios.

Curtain up on the stuff that nightmares are made of—fresh from the poison kitchen of Baroque opera: murder, intrigue, and acts of desperation, garnished with infectious enthusiasm, a taste for the morbid, and a pinch of dark humor.

### **Il Giratempo**

**Laila Salome Fischer, mezzo soprano**

**Max Volbers, harpsichord and direction**

**Works by Georg Friedrich Händel, Antonio Vivaldi, Attilio Ariosti and Carl Heinrich Graun**

***2 x 45 minutes, one intermission***

***This program has been released by Perfect Noise in 2024.***

