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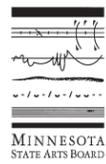
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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

41ST SEASON 2025-2026



CONCERT 2

Genius of Rome:
Baroque Virtuosi and Visionaries

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 2026 | 7:30 P.M.

Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Rochester, MN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026 | 7:30 P.M.

Sundin Music Hall, St. Paul, MN

CONCERT 2

Genius of Rome: Baroque Virtuosi and Visionaries

PROGRAM

GIOVANNI ANTONIO LEONI

(CA. 1600–CA. 1652)

*Sonate di violino a voce sola ... Libro primo,
Opera terza*
Sonata XXX Terzo Tono

ALESSANDRO STRADELLA (1639–1682)

Dodici Sinfonie... a violino solo, con Basso Continuo
Sinfonia Seconda

GEORG FRIEDRICH HANDEL (1685–1759)

Sinfonia from Tu fedel? Tu costante? HWV 171
Sonata à 5 in B-flat major, HWV 288
Andante | Adagio | Allegro

GIUSEPPE VALENTINI (1681–1753)

Concerto Grosso, Op. 7, No. 11 in A minor
Largo | Allegro | Grave–Allegro–Grave | Presto |
Adagio | Allegro assai

INTERMISSION

ARCANGELO CORELLI (1653–1713)

*Sinfonia to Oratorio Santa Beatrice d'Este
in D minor*
Grave | Allegro | Adagio | Largo assai | Vivace

PIETRO ANTONIO LOCATELLI (1695–1764)

Concerto Grosso, Op. 1, No. 1 in F major
Allegro | Largo | Allegro | Largo | Allegro

GIOVANNI MOSSI (CA. 1680–1742)

Concerto Grosso, Op. 4, No. 11 in E minor
Allegro | Adagio | Allegro

GEORG MUFFATT (1653–1704)

*Exquisitoris harmoniae instrumentalis
gravi-jucundae*
**Concerto Grosso No. 12 in G major
(Propitia sydera)**

Sonata. Grave | Sonata. Allegro | Aria | Gavotta |
Grave. Ciacona | Borea

Artists of Genius of Rome

BAROQUE VIOLIN

Bojan Čičić* | *artistic director*
Theresa Elliott
Benjamin Lenzmeier
Marc Levine*
Conor O'Brien
Miriam Scholz-Carlson
Mary Sorlie

BAROQUE VIOLA

Jennifer Kalika
Yvonne Smith*

BAROQUE CELLO

Eva Lymenstull
Tulio Rondón*

BAROQUE BASS

Sara Thompson

HARPSICHORD

Tami Morse

*denotes principal players

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CONTACT

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St. Paul, MN 55101
info@lyrabaroque.org
www.lyrabaroque.org

Introducing Lyra's new Artistic Director, Bojan Čičić



Bojan Čičić

The Lyra Baroque Orchestra is thrilled to announce the appointment of Bojan Čičić as our new Artistic Director. Bojan Čičić, originally from Zagreb, Croatia, and now residing in Oxford, England, is a distinguished violinist and leader known for his innovative interpretations and deep understanding of the early music repertoire. With a career that spans across Europe and North America, Čičić has garnered acclaim for his performances and leadership of some of the most prestigious early music ensembles in the world, including the Academy of Ancient Music. He is also the historical violin faculty at the Royal College of Music in London, the founder of the Illyria Consort, and a Delphian Records recording artist.

"I'm truly honored to have been offered the post of Artistic Director of Lyra Baroque Orchestra," said Bojan Čičić. "The experience of performing with my colleagues from Lyra Baroque Orchestra in January [2025] was one of mutual respect and trust in creating a concert event for our audiences that was informative, entertaining, and, most importantly, rich in emotions during the performance. I very much look forward to continuing in our endeavor to create similar concert experiences with my musical family in St. Paul for the years to come."



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Jacques Ogg, Lyra's Artistic Director Emeritus, had the following to say about the appointment of Čičić: "I am happy with the choice of Bojan Čičić as my successor... He is a wonderful violinist, a dedicated teacher, and a warm, friendly colleague! The concert he gave in January [2025] was just beautiful. I trust he can lead Lyra to a bright future and create programs that will make audiences happy."



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Genius of Rome: Baroque Virtuosi and Visionaries

Program Notes by Bojan Čičić

The title of tonight's program was borrowed from an exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London that celebrated the explosion of baroque art in Rome at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the same way, this program attempts to acknowledge the pivotal role Rome has had in the development of the seventeenth century musical inventions, forms, and styles, as well as its influence on the composers that followed.

We start in the middle of the century, in the year 1652, which saw the publication of **GIOVANNI ANTONIO LEONI's** *Sonate di violino a voce sola*, a collection of thirty-one sonatas for violin and basso continuo that happens to be the first known collection to be dedicated entirely to solo violin. The Sonata XXX *Terzo Tono* means that it was written in the church third mode—or Phrygian mode—that follows the Gregorian system of scales used in a church service. It is an arresting piece, full of unexpected twists and turns, typical of the Italian style from the early seventeenth century.

ALESSANDRO STRADELLA was one of the most colorful—and dare I say scandalous—composers we know. So colorful that back in England where I live, people today would call him a *legend*—if the Italian composers of the later part of the seventeenth century were ever a topic heard in pubs and taverns! In Rome he tried to embezzle money from the Roman Catholic Church and had numerous affairs with married women that made him many enemies, all of which led to him being forced to leave the city, never to return. He escaped to Venice, where he soon began another affair with a mistress of his benefactor, which led to another escape, this time to Turin. After he was attacked and left for dead, he somehow survived and fled in 1678 to Genoa, where he composed operas and music for local nobility. He met his sad end in this city in Piazza Banchi in 1682, not surviving the attack. His *Sonate di viole*, written before 1675, is considered the beginning of the concerto grosso form and had a great influence on Arcangelo Corelli and later Handel, both of whom experimented with this form in their work. Regardless of his tendencies to create havoc

with the gentry and their wives and mistresses, today he is considered one of the most important and prolific musical innovators of the seventeenth century.

Popularity of Arcangelo Corelli's music meant that musicians came from all over Europe to study music and start their careers in Rome. **GEORG FRIEDRICH HANDEL** was no exception, as he lived in the Eternal City between 1706 and 1710, during which time he composed secular cantatas, sacred music, as well as some instrumental music. One such cantata is *Tu fedel? Tu costante?* from which we took the opening sinfonia as an interlude to the famous *Sonata à 5*, composed in 1706. Handel composed it in Hamburg before setting off on his journey to Italy, showcasing his familiarity with the Italian style even before his arrival in Rome. He came back to the opening of the first movement of this sonata and repurposed it in his opera *Il Pastor Fido* in 1712. The last movement is a real firecracker for the violin, showing how young Handel had a sense for making a memorable ending to a piece.

GIUSEPPE VALENTINI was a very prolific and successful composer who published many works in Rome and Amsterdam, leaving us with a couple of operas and oratorios. He succeeded Corelli as director of the concertino at San Luigi dei Francesi church in Rome for many decades. Today his most popular work is from his op. 7, *Concerto a quattro violini*, effectively a concerto grosso, showcasing an experimentation in musical forms larger than usual. The vast fuga in the second movement uses a technically demanding theme and virtuoso writing is given to all four soloists, as well as continuo players. It is a real tour de force in both composition and performance, pushing the boundaries on audience expectations, as well as performers' necessary focus on achieving a sustained fever pitch intensity.

When devising a program such as this, a work by **ARCANGELO CORELLI** that would normally spring to mind would be his ever-popular Concerti Grossi, Op. 6. It is one of the very few publications of the eighteenth century that never actually went out of

print until the present day. Following its release, it went through over ten editions within its first twenty years. However, I felt that the opportunity presented itself to perform work that is certainly lesser known, but nevertheless very representative of his style. Corelli composed this sinfonia in 1689 as an instrumental introduction to the oratorio *Santa Beatrice d'Este*, written by another composer, Giovanni Lorenzo Lulier. At its premiere, Corelli directed an orchestra that counted 39 violins, 10 violas, 17 cellos and additional instruments that made the total number of musicians 80, a very respectable number even for, let's say, Minnesota Orchestra. We can't recreate the forces used at the premiere of this work, but can certainly bring forth some of the reasons behind the immense popularity of this composer.

PIETRO ANTONIO LOCATELLI was the foremost violin virtuoso of the eighteenth century thanks to the publication of his Violin Concertos, Op. 3, titled *L'arte del Violino* in 1733, particularly the fiendish 24 caprices included at the end of the fast movements. These concertos proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for many violinists of that time. His early works, however, were much less extravagant. Concerti Grossi, Op. 1, published in 1721, shows a debt to the Roman style with the added rhythmic figurations that point the way to the Galant style that was just a decade away. This concerto is a joyful and dynamic opener to this entire opus.

Any aspiring violinist of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century would try to spin a story about how they studied violin under the great Corelli. Though one cannot prove this type of connection between him and **GIOVANNI MOSSI**, in his first five instrumental published collections, Mossi identifies himself as *Roman* on the title page. The influential German critic and lexicographer Johann Mattheson refers to Mossi as a "follower of Corelli." One might reconsider such a statement after hearing his Concerto Grosso No. 11, and add the name Antonio Vivaldi as a source of inspiration. By the time his fourth opus was published in 1727, Corelli's style, though still influential, was becoming a bit old fashioned and a new force in Italian music emerged by that point, in the form of the Red Priest from Venice.

Born the same year as Corelli, the organist and composer **GEORG MUFFAT**, while visiting Italy in the early 1680s, described hearing Corelli's concertos in Rome

"performed with the utmost accuracy." Muffat not only heard Corelli's music, he also had his own music performed in Corelli's home, and some scholars have suggested that he influenced Corelli. Muffat's first two collections of instrumental music reflect his association with Corelli in their texture (two violins plus a bass instrument playing in alternation with a larger ensemble). In the preface to his second collection, Muffat specifies that these works have multiple uses at court, whether as entertainment for nobility and their guests or "at state banquets, serenades, and assemblies of musical amateurs and virtuosi." He is equally adamant that these works are not appropriate for use in church. The movements of the Concerto Grosso No. 12 in G major, *Propitia Sydera* (Favorable Stars), are based on the composer's earlier compositions. The subtitle is practical and not necessarily descriptive: Muffat provided each concerto in this set with a distinctive, if cryptic, title in order to suggest the occasion for which the work could be played. ■



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