

**LIVE**  
FROM LINCOLN CENTER



**December 19, 2010 at 5:00 on PBS**  
**Baroque Holiday with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center**

One of the more remarkable phenomena in the history of music during the last 60 years has been the eruption of interest in music of the distant past, specifically the music of the so-called Baroque period. Our next Live From Lincoln Center presentation, on Sunday, December 19, will be a "Baroque Holiday" concert performed by members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

What exactly is Baroque Music? Its historical parameters are roughly the years between 1600 and 1750, and during that century-and-a-half music took a radically different direction. For centuries before, music had largely been the province of the church, an influence from the "outside" employed to enhance religious observance. Not that composers of the Baroque period abandoned music for the church; hardly, but they composed music in many different genres. For example opera as we basically know it today came into being in the very early 1600s with Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and Jacopo Peri's *Dafne*. Baroque music, for the most part, consists of a single melodic line with accompaniment instead of the earlier periods' polyphony---several different lines played simultaneously. The style seems to have originated and flourished in Italy (witness the above-mentioned Monteverdi and Peri), but it spread quickly to other European countries, particularly to Germany where Bach and Handel were and remain cornerstones of the international Baroque repertory.

Our Live From Lincoln Center "Baroque Holiday" will bring us the music of no fewer than 7 composers of the Baroque era, most of them Italian. Have you noticed that the names Monteverdi and Peri both end with the letter "i"? Perhaps in order to qualify as a composer during the Baroque period in Italy your name HAD to end in "i"! We have Corelli, Sammartini, Vivaldi and Tartini, all of whom will be represented on our program (Corelli and Vivaldi twice each as a matter of fact). The solo and/or multiple Concerto for diverse instruments was a favorite vehicle for Baroque composers, along with Sonatas for solo instrument and accompaniment(s). Those will be the forms of all the works on our "Baroque Holiday".

Of all the Italian Baroque composers it is Antonio Vivaldi who is probably best-known, and that through his sequence of four violin concertos known collectively as "The Four Seasons". But Vivaldi was an incredibly prolific composer, with hundreds and hundreds of works to his credit. Some 50 years ago a massive project was undertaken to record the entire output of Vivaldi. Some 70 works were successfully engraved, and then tragedy struck: the conductor, named Max Goberman, suffered a fatal heart attack in Vienna at the age of 51. Max Goberman was the father of the creator and Executive Producer of Live From Lincoln Center, John Goberman.

Two other composers will be represented: Bach, inevitably, with his familiar D Minor Concerto for Two Violins. And a Chaconne for Two Violins and Continuo by a little-known native-born Italian composer of the 17th century whose name does NOT end in "i": Nicola Matteis. It is presumed that Matteis was born in Naples but he spent most of his short life (he died in his late 20s) in London. He apparently was an expert violinist as well as a popular composer in his time.

Special attention, perhaps, should be attached to the guest appearances of two of the soloists: the renowned recorder player Michala Petri, and guitarist and archlute player Lars Hannibal. Petri, a native of Denmark, has achieved world-wide fame as a player on the instrument that is the precursor of our modern flute. But in addition to her expertise in Baroque repertory, she is also firmly committed to music of our time and has commissioned works from the likes of Malcolm Arnold, Gordon Jacob and Ezra Laderman among many others. She has a considerable discography to her credit, among which is a collection of Sonatas by Bach and Handel with Keith Jarrett playing harpsichord. And as a result of her frequent appearances with Mr. Hannibal she has taken a keen interest in music for recorder and guitar.

A final word about the archlute, Lars Hannibal's other plucked instrument. It was developed in Europe around 1600 as a compromise in size between the larger (and louder) theorbo and the tenor lute. Handel was a staunch supporter of the archlute and included it in his opera scores. And just last season the Spanish archlute player, Javier Mas, accompanied the poet and performer, Leonard Cohen, on a world tour in which Mas rearranged some old Cohen songs and played solos on the archlute.

So there we are: an intriguing "Baroque Holiday" on the next Live From Lincoln Center, Sunday, December 19 a 5 PM. I leave you with the usual reminder to check your local PBS station for the exact date and time in your area.

Happy Holidays!

MARTIN BOOKSPAN