

Pegasus Early Music

presents

Humours of Whisky

The Berwick Fiddle Consort (Lydia Becker, Julia Connor, Sarah Douglass, violins);
Joëlla Becker, cello; Christa Patton, harp, winds & percussion; Deborah Fox, lutes

The Bush aboon Traquair

Neil Gow (1727-1807)

Sonata 2: Bush aboon Traquair

Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762)

Slip Jigs (Ireland):

Phililp McCue – Rakes of Westmeath – Humours of Whisky

Hornpipes (England):

Downfall of the Ginn –

Rondeau from *Abdelazar* –

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Cobbler's Hornpipe – Rowling Hornpipe

Pieces from Rowallan and Straloch lute manuscripts (Scotland):

A Scot's Tune – Gypsies Lilt – If Love is the Cause of my Mourning –

Canaries – A port – The Scot's Air – Canaries

Sir Harry Ddu

John Parry (1776-1851)

Pieces from Bunting and O'Carolan:

Joice's Tunes – The pleasant Rocks –

The Chanter's Tune – Carolan's Concerto

Slow set (Ireland):

Slaunt Ri Pluilil – Limbrick's Lament – Captain Higgins

A Sonata of Scots Tunes:

James Oswald (1710-1769)

Cromlit's Lilt – Polwart on the Green

Reels (Ireland):

The Groves – The Girl that Broke My Heart –

Star of Munster – Maghera Mountain

Passamezzos:

Mortlake's Ground from *Musick's Hand Maid* John Blow (1649-1708)

John Anderson my Jo – Brisk – Johnnie Cope

Program Notes

In the musical family tree, "classical" and "traditional" music are often assumed to hail from completely different branches. Much like third cousins once removed, we know there must be a common ancestor somewhere, but where? No one is quite certain (although it makes for lively debate at family reunions). Far from being distant relatives, however, classical early music and traditional music are closely linked. Much early music developed out of traditional European dance music forms, while traditional dance music in turn was shaped by new instruments and preserved through efforts to document it in published tune collections. Today's program will explore the fruits of this musical cross-pollination, inviting you to hear both early and traditional music with new ears and — we hope— leave with a spring in your step.

Ireland and Scotland have been fertile ground for early and traditional musical mixing since the 18th century. The music of Irish composer and harpist Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738) shows the equal influence of traditional Irish harp music and European art music, and as such he is celebrated in both spheres. Collections of Irish and Scottish traditional tunes frequently contain a basso continuo line, which you will hear in Neil Gow's setting of "The Bush Aboon Traquair," in the slip jig "Philip McCue" from the 1786 collection *The Hibernian Muse*, and in our final set featuring English and Scottish tunes over the passamezzo bassline, which itself comes to early music from Italian folk dance. Also popular were trio sonata arrangements of traditional tunes, including James Oswald's Sonata of Scots Tunes from 1740 and Francesco Geminiani's setting of "The Bush Aboon Traquair."

The hornpipe and jig are notable examples of traditional dances that made the leap from traditional music to art music, and you will hear examples of both today. Unusually, our hornpipes are in 3/2 time (most traditional hornpipes are in 4/4). You may also notice a familiar Purcell melody woven into the set, highlighting its connection to traditional dance. Our jig set features three Irish slip jigs, the second of which showcases the Irish composer Burke Thumoth's fascinating variations on "The Rakes of Westmeath," published in 1746. Writing variations on traditional tunes was not confined to early music composers. In Ireland, particularly in the East Clare region, home to a well-preserved and vibrant aural (passed down by ear) music tradition, musicians frequently create their own unique variations of favorite tunes. See if you can pick out the variations in "The Girl Who Broke my Heart," "The Star of Munster," and "Maghera Mountain."

And what about the musicians themselves? While today it is relatively uncommon for classical musicians to venture into the world of "trad" (and vice versa), this seems to have been par for the course in 18th century Scotland, where many musicians transitioned seamlessly between the two, from dance bands to orchestra and back again. This musical back-and-forth was in large part made possible by a relatively recent Italian invention, the violin, as the instrument's versatility allows it to shine in countless different styles of music.

As 21st century listeners, we tend to approach "concert" and "traditional" music with very different expectations about how the music is going to move us, about how we can enjoy it, and about which elements matter most. Often when listening to traditional music, we expect to feel the groove, to get our feet tapping. With classical concert music, we listen for "artistry," and though we are still primarily attuned to how the music makes us feel, we have also been conditioned to listen for technical prowess or to appreciate nuances of interpretation—phrasing, dynamics, articulations and other musical decisions of the interpreter. Many of these differences in approach are learned behaviors; we are taught what to listen for and how to respond by our own cultural practices and environmental cues. Yet by playing early and traditional music side-by-side, this program offers you the opportunity to be caught off guard, to break down some of your assumptions about how you listen to different styles of music, and to experience both early and traditional music in a new way. You may find yourself tapping your feet to Geminiani's trio sonata or appreciating the depth of feeling and technical mastery behind an East Clare reel, gaining a new perspective on each. In any event, we hope this program will lead you to a deeper appreciation of both.

—Julia Connor

About the performers

Comprised of conservatory-trained violinists with deep roots in both historical performance practice and traditional folk styles, the **Berwick Fiddle Consort** (BFC), founded by Lydia Becker, Julia Connor, and Sarah Douglass, performs historical folk music on period instruments. The ensemble strives to approach fiddle tunes from a multi-faceted perspective, combining baroque violin technique, aurally-learned regional fiddling traditions, and study of historical manuscripts. Drawing on these sources, BFC creates period-instrument arrangements of traditional folk music that experiment with various aspects of historical performance, always bringing their own creativity to bear.

BFC concerts offer an exciting counterpoint to the traditional canon of historical repertoire and the classical music experience. Audience members are encouraged to tap their feet to the music, cheer after tune changes, or get up and dance. This relaxed, welcoming performance atmosphere allows listeners to personally connect with the music and band members.

BFC was formed in the summer of 2018 at the Oregon Bach Festival when Lydia, Julia, and Sarah began a nightly tradition of meeting after rehearsals to play fiddle tunes on baroque violins well into the night. At these nocturnal jam sessions, they quickly found that performing 17th and 18th century music from the British Isles and Canada on the kinds of instruments that were used at that time opened up new dimensions of sound, rhythm, and musical expression. BFC presented their debut concert at the 2019 Boston Early Music Festival Fringe, and have since performed on the Society for Historically Informed Performance (SoHIP) Summer Concert season in 2020 and 2021, on the Pegasus Rising Artists and NYS Baroque Young Artists 2021 series, and at the 2023 BEMF Fringe. Other performances include appearances at the Beacon Hill Friends House in Boston, the Sudbury Historical Society, and the Shutesbury Athletic Club in Massachusetts, Off the Dock chamber festival in Skaneateles, NY, St John's in the Village in NYC, St John's Episcopal in New Haven, and Will Rogers in Saranac Lake, NY. BFC has also been an ensemble-in-residence at Avaloch Farm in Boscawen, NH.

French-American violinist **Lydia Becker** unites historical performance practices with creativity and curiosity, engaging diverse audiences through explorative music-making. Lydia currently serves as concertmaster for La Forza delle Stelle, and has held concertmaster positions for Juilliard415, the Boston Early Music Festival Young Artists program, and the Eastman Collegium Musicum. As a core member of Juilliard415, Lydia toured the Netherlands and Germany, and has performed with Rachel Podger, Reggie Mobley, William Christie, and Lionel Meunier, among others. She has appeared as a soloist with Juilliard415 (under the direction of Masaaki Suzuki), Publick Musick, and the Eastman Collegium Musicum (with Christel Thielmann and Paul O'Dette). She is a founding member of the Berwick Fiddle Consort, an ensemble that explores historical fiddling traditions of the British Isles. Equally at home on modern violin, Lydia regularly teaches and performs at Rencontres Musicales Internationales des Graves (France), where she has premiered new works by composers such as François Rossé and collaborated with Maxim Vengerov.

Lydia is a Benzaquen Career Advancement Grant recipient and a Mercury-Juilliard Fellow. She is also a former Presser Scholar, Morse Teaching Artist Fellow, and a member of Pi Kappa Lambda. Lydia holds degrees from the Juilliard School, the Eastman School of Music, and the Conservatoire de Bordeaux.

Violinist and fiddler **Julia Connor** has a wide-ranging musical voice, performing everything from baroque music on period instruments to fiddle music from Ireland to new works by living composers. Julia is a founding member of both the Berwick Fiddle Consort and the violin and piano duo Room to Spare, which composes and performs original groove based new music. Recent highlights include a performance with La Donna Musicale and Rumbarroco at the 2023 Boston Early Music Festival, a recording of music for Lady M., a new ballet presented by the Louisville Ballet at the 2023 Kentucky Shakespeare Festival, and appearances with the Berwick Fiddle Consort at both the Boston Early Music Festival Fringe and the Off the Dock Chamber Music Festival in Skaneateles, NY.

Julia's solo playing has been featured in the Society for Historically Informed Performance (SoHIP) summer concert series (Boston), Kings Chapel Concert series (Boston), the Music by Women Festival (MS), and ClareFM radio (Ireland). She has been an artist-in-residence at Avaloch Farm (Boscawen, NH) and PLAYA (Summer Lake, OR). Julia holds a Master's degree with honors from the New England Conservatory and is a graduate of the Oberlin College and Conservatory, where she earned degrees with high honors in violin performance and Hispanic studies.

Sarah Bleile Douglass is a versatile baroque violinist who has charmed audiences in North America and Europe in both her fields of baroque music and traditional fiddling. She serves as co-artistic director and founding violinist of the Calgarian concert series Chamber Muse, and as a founding member of the Berwick Fiddle Consort, a crossover ensemble that combines historical performance practice with traditional Scottish, Irish and Canadian fiddle traditions. In 2021, Sarah and her duo partner Shelby Yamin released an album of previously unrecorded violin duets by Maddalena Sirmen Lombardini. Sarah's playing can also be heard on the Juno award-winning album "Early Italian Cello Concertos" with Elinor Frey and Rosa Barocca, and on R&B artist Sophie Coran's album "S P A C E." Sarah holds

degrees from McGill University and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and has studied on exchange at the Royal Conservatory the Hague. She performs regularly with Arion Baroque Orchestra in Montreal and Rosa Barocca in Calgary, and has also appeared with Pallade Musica and Erathos Renaissance Chamber Ensemble.

Joëlla Becker is an innovative cellist, actively performing works in engaging and interactive ways. Based in Rochester, NY, she frequently performs in a variety of concerts throughout the North East and Europe. Joëlla strives to make each performance meaningful and impactful for her audience through engaging performances and new repertoire. She is passionate about new music, premiering works of emerging composers, including Charles Berovsky and Kitty Xioa, and collaborating with ensembles, such as fivebyfive and Ensemble Signal. This has led her to play in festivals such as June in Buffalo and Mostly Modern Festival. In her never-ending quest for artistic inspiration, Joëlla equally explores new music of the past, performing early music on period instruments. This has brought her to play with Publick Musick and on the Eastman's Collegium Musicum at the Boston Early Music Fringe Festival.

Joëlla has been invited to participate in the Smithsonian's Beethoven Academy and Haydn Academy, playing on the museum's collection of historical instruments. She grew up in France and earned a Diplôme d'Etudes Musicales from the Conservatoire de Bordeaux as well as from the Conservatoire de Saint Maur des Fossés. She then continued her studies at the Eastman School of Music, completing her Bachelor's degree in 2022 and is currently pursuing a Masters in Cello Performance as well as a Masters in Early Music. Joëlla Becker is the cellist and co-founder of the Kenaniah Project, a chamber ensemble dedicated to performing and composing sacred music for the Church. When Joëlla is not discovering new pieces, she enjoys improvising with friends, spending time with family, and singing karaoke.

Christa Patton, historical harpist and early wind specialist, has performed throughout the Americas, Europe, and Japan with many of today's premier early music ensembles including Piffaro the Renaissance Band, Early Music New York, Boston Camerata, The King's Noyse, Folger Consort, Newberry Consort, Apollo's Fire, Parthenia, ARTEK, and Chatham Baroque, to name a few.

As a Baroque harpist specializing in 17th century opera, Christa has performed with New York City Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Opera Atelier, and the Opera Theater of Saint Louis. As an educator and scholar, she has served on the faculty of Rutgers University and the Graduate Center at CUNY. She is also musical director of the Baroque Opera Workshop at Queens College, specializing in the works of early 17th century composers. In the recording industry, Christa has fulfilled the roles of both recording artist and producer.

Deborah Fox is a lutenist with a span of repertoire ranging from medieval to baroque music, as a soloist, chamber music player, and baroque opera continuo. She has performed with the major early music ensembles and festivals from Newfoundland to Australia. She graduated *cum laude* from Smith College, and received the Certificate of Advanced Studies in Early Music at London's Guildhall School, specializing in the improvised accompaniment practices of the baroque. Her teachers have included Paul O'Dette, Pat O'Brien, and Nigel North. She has been a Teaching Artist for the Aesthetic Education Institute. She is the founder and director of Pegasus Early Music in Rochester, NY, and the director of NYS Baroque in Ithaca and Syracuse, NY.

www.pegasusearlymusic.org