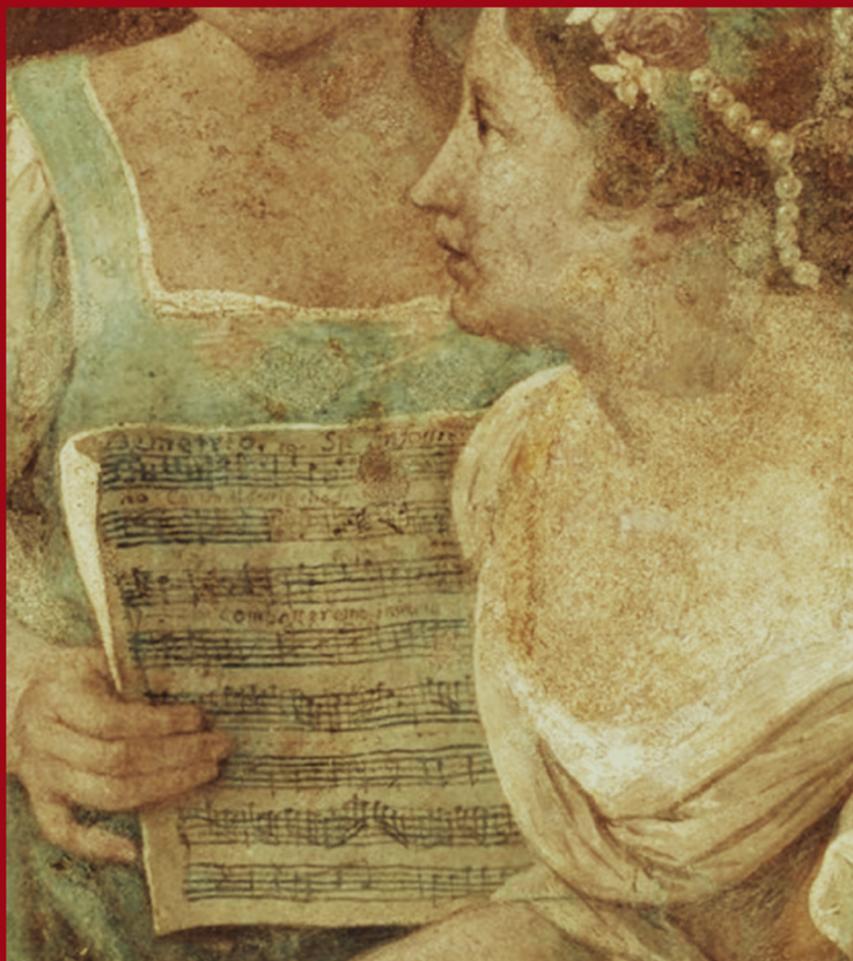


*Linden* baroque orchestra

GLORIANA  
WOMEN IN HARMONY

Conductor  
Ashley Solomon



Music from  
the  
orphanages  
of Venice  
to the  
Court of  
Dresden

February 22nd 2026

**Ferrandini** Sinfonia, Talestri, regina della amazoni - Allegro- Andante-Presto  
**Porpora** Beatus Vir\* - Allegro

**Vivaldi** Sinfonia, Al Santo Sepolcro RV169 - Adagio - Fugue

**Vivaldi** Credo RV591 - Credo in unum Deum - Et incarnatus est - Crucifixus - Et resurrexit

**Vivaldi** Concerto for Dresden Orchestra RV577 - Allegro - Largo non troppo - Allegro

- INTERVAL -

**Venturini** Sonata in A major Op. 1 No 8. Allegro - Adagio - Menuet 1 & 2

**Hasse** Laudate Pueri

**Locatelli / Pisendel** Sinfonia Funebre\* - Largo - Alla Breve - Grave - Moderato -  
La Consolazione

**Zelenka** Per singulos dies - Andante

**Telemann** Conclusion in e minor from Tafelmusik Part 1 - Allegro

**Zelenka** Nisi Dominus - Vivace

\*First modern performances

Welcome to tonight's concert charting a musical journey  
from Venice to Dresden which has been curated by Richard Austen

**We begin our musical journey in Venice. We represent the four *Ospedali Grande*  
and the star composers who wrote for them. We then travel musically to Dresden.**

The charitable *Ospedali* fulfilled important welfare functions in the Venice Republic, housing and feeding the diseased, the destitute and the abandoned. They kept much begging, crime and prostitution off the streets and gave occupation to the many inmates, one of which, famously, was to provide high quality musical performances, performing this function throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Orphaned boys learned a trade and had to leave when they reached the age of 15. The girls were taught domestic skills and a musical education, the most talented among them staying and becoming members of the *Ospedali's* renowned orchestras and choirs.

The music provided a lucrative source of income from the cognoscenti and wealthy tourists who marvelled at the skill of these instrumentalists and singers and the fabulous outpouring of musical compositions. The valuable 'brand' was carefully curated and the girls remained shielded from the outside world, their allure increased by performing behind screens and curtains (many bore the scars of their traumatic early days including, commonly, from smallpox).

***Ospedale dei Mendicanti*** housed beggars, orphans, infirm elders and lepers. The site on the Fondamenta Nove in Castello is now occupied by the civic hospital and the original church of San Lazaro serves as the hospital chapel. Ferrandini and Galuppi both worked there and Vivaldi's father taught the violin. Like the *Pietà*, it took in girl orphans who studied music and sang behind a grill at popular fund-raising services.

**Giovanni Battista Ferrandini** (1710-91) was a Venetian child prodigy oboist, attaining employment in the Munich Court at the advanced age of 12! He spent most of his professional life there, playing and composing chamber music, cantatas and operas but moved to Padua in 1755 and was visited by the teenage Mozart and his father in 1771.

We begin with Ferrandini's ***Overture, Talestri, regina delle amazoni*** ('Talestri, Queen of the Amazons') written for the *Ospedale dei Medicanti* in 1760 after his move to Padua. The libretto was by **Maria Antonia Walpurgis**, Princess of Bavaria and Electress of Saxony, who also composed her own version of the opera which was published in 1763. Ferrandini taught the Princess, as did Porpora and Hasse – her version of the opera is very much in Hasse's style. Which came first and who copied whom, is unclear. She was certainly multi-talented, being a proficient composer, singer, harpsichordist, painter, poet and also had time to found a textile factory and a brewery. On marrying and becoming Electress of Saxony in 1747, she took Ferrandini's music with her to Dresden.

**Nicola Porpora** (1686–1768) was a famous Neopolitan composer and teacher of singing, counting among his pupils the illustrious castrati, Farinelli and Caffarelli. He also taught Hasse and Josef Haydn. He settled mostly in Venice teaching vocal skills at three of the ***Ospedali: Della Pietà, degl'Incurabili, and Ospedaletto dei Derelitti***, where this fresco appears. It was originally founded in 1527 to cope with an influx of peasants escaping famine on the mainland. Based around Palladio's church, it served the homeless, invalids and orphans. Porpora wrote many sacred works including the ***Beatus Vir*** we are performing. This work seems not to have been heard in public since its first performance.



Porpora also spent some time in London unsuccessfully setting up an opera company to rival Handel before spending four years in Dresden as *Kapellmeister* until he fell out with the star rivals, Hasse and his wife Faustina. He produced a large number of operas and other vocal works. Though hugely successful and famous, he died, like Vivaldi and many other musicians, in poverty after musical fashions moved on.

***Ospedale della Pietà*** was the largest of the four, housing some 4,000 illegitimate girls. They were the product of prostitution, general debauchery for which Venice was famous, inadequate contraception and economic hardship. Whereas male offspring could eventually find a trade, girls had little prospect of economic independence. The tragic options were often to drown them in the canal or place them in the revolving *scaffetta* (a small drawer in a window) to be passed anonymously into the Pietà.

**Antonio Vivaldi** (1678–1741) boasted he could compose a concerto in all its parts faster than a copyist could write it out and his output of over 500 concertos for all combinations of instruments supports this claim and a great number of mostly sacred vocal works, There were dozens of operas, too, but worldly entertainments were forbidden to the girls. The ‘Red Priest’ – so called for his dramatic red hair rather than his volatile nature or occasionally sinful behaviour – was employed at ***La Pietà*** on and off throughout his musical career when he wasn’t falling out with employers. Though ordained he did not conduct services, possibly due to his asthma but he was a famously energetic and virtuosic violinist. His compositions, a great number of which were for the girls in his charge, were often brilliant and innovative and gained enormous popularity across Europe.

Richard Austen, who designed and arranged this programme, writes: ‘We start our Vivaldi sequence with ***Sinfonia, Al Santo Sepolcro*** which was likely used in a sacred context. The **Credo** we perform is one of many sacred works he wrote at *La Pietà*. Music found in the other *Ospedali* is very clearly written for female voices, usually SSAA (sopranos and altos). However, Vivaldi's choral music is always scored as SATB (includes tenors and basses), although the solos are generally soprano or alto. We know his choral music was definitely written for an all-female choir because the singers are named. So, it has to be assumed the tenor and bass parts were sung by women. What we don’t know is whether they sung the parts at pitch or the octave higher. They probably sung the parts at pitch, which explains the heavy bass support in Vivaldi's string writing (usually violas and all bass instruments doubling the choral bass line). We have adapted this Credo ourselves for SSAA instead of SATB. The notable characteristic of this work is that the choral lines mainly state the text homophonically, while the Crucifixus features a heavy walking figure in the bass.’

Vivaldi's **Concerto RV577** was written specifically for the Dresden court orchestra around 1720 and influenced the orchestra's ‘house style’.

**INTERVAL** (20 mins max)

Glass of wine or soft drink and savoury nibbles included with your ticket  
(additional available for a donation)

## We now head musically towards Dresden

The physical journey, which would now be undertaken in more than ten hours by car or three and a half hours by flight via Frankfurt was, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, an arduous and costly undertaking of several weeks, typically on horseback, carriage and on foot via trade routes over the Alps such as the Brenner Pass to Vienna, then to Prague and on to Dresden. The roads were unpaved and potholed, with many dangers from rock-falls, landslides, floods, and highwaymen. Bad weather could hold up travellers for days and lodgings were hugely expensive.

So why make this risky trek? Dresden, the capital of Saxony, was known as the 'Venice of the North' or 'Florence on the Elbe', under the keen artistic patronage of Augustus II 'The Strong', Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. He had toured France and Italy and learned that a successful absolute monarch needed to demonstrate his power and wealth with something approaching a Versailles - in his case the Zwinger palace, complete with 2,000-seat opera house - and an expensive



collection of prime Italian musicians, painters and architects to imbue his court with Italian flair. Sadly, many of the fine buildings of that period was destroyed in 1945 by allied bombs and the resultant firestorm, though with much now reconstructed it is still possible to imagine the splendour of the city. Augustus was a fairly incompetent ruler and his sobriquet 'The Strong' was based on his alleged but possibly exaggerated siring of over 360 children, his ability to break a horseshoe with his bare hands and his prowess at fox tossing, a popular sport amongst the aristocracy. By his own admission on his death bed, 'God forgive me, my entire life was one sin' (how many modern leaders would say this, I wonder?).

The Dresden court orchestra, led by the virtuoso violinists Jean-Baptiste Woulmyer and Johann Georg Pisendel, was one of the finest in Europe with technical precision and flair, the string players provided with a set of Stradivari instruments. Pisendel studied with Vivaldi and the court leant heavily on Italian style, importing composers such as Nicola Porpora, Johann Adolph Hasse with his wife, the famous soprano, Faustina Bordoni. Jan Dismas Zelenka, a bass player in the orchestra eventually became Kapellmeister. JS Bach and Telemann were heavily influenced by and had close ties with Dresden.

There are some 5,600 music manuscripts in the Dresden archives being digitised, a large part of the legacy coming from Pisendel's collection.

The period 1697-1763 is considered the most brilliant period of Dresden's music history. In 1760 a huge fire consumed a great deal of the court musical archive though over 1,700 manuscripts from the period survived to this day in other locations in the city.

**Francesco Venturini** (1675-1745) was possibly Belgian or French in origin and spent most of his creative life as violinist and Kapellmeister in Hanover. Having an Italian name, whether real or manufactured, was probably a useful career asset at a time when Italian music was sweeping across Europe. His only published music, Opus 1, is a set of orchestral works for winds and strings from the first decade of the 1700s, unusually in a mix of French and Italian styles he called *Sonata da camera*. Some were used in the Dresden court orchestra as sinfonias or interludes for vocal music. Tonight's is a two movement Sinfonia with a solo violin part and oboes that we are using as an introduction to Hasse's *Laudate Pueri*.

**Johann Adolph Hasse** (1699-1783) was an immensely popular and prolific composer, especially of opera (probably 70 or more of them) and sacred music. Coming from near Hamburg he spent several years in Naples where he was friends with Alessandro Scarlatti and Farinelli he then in 1730 became Kapellmeister to the Dresden court, where he was also friendly with JS Bach. He frequently moved back and forth between Dresden, Vienna (where he met the young Mozart) and Italy and spent his last years in Venice. His wife, Faustina Bordoni was one of Europe's foremost opera divas and before her marriage had starred in several of Handel's London productions.

Hasse worked at the *Ospedale degl' Incurabili* in 1733 during time away from Dresden after the death of Augustus 'The Strong'. Hasse's *Laudate Pueri* was composed for the girls at this Ospedale. We are performing just the first movement. He later adapted it for the Dresden Court that had a larger SATB choir.

Trying to keep up with the restless Hasse, we follow him back to Dresden and pick up sacred music there:

**Johann Georg Pisendel** (1688–1755) was a German violinist and composer who led and later directed the brilliant Dresden court orchestra for most of his creative life. Many composers wrote concertos for him such as Vivaldi, Albinoni, Telemann and he produced a relatively small number of high-quality instrumental compositions of his own.

**Pietro Locatelli** (1695–1764), a renowned violin virtuoso and composer left his native Italy in 1723 and heading on a European tour towards his final destination of Amsterdam, where he was to take up residence, passed through Dresden. There he came in contact with Pisendel, Quantz and others and displayed his astonishing virtuosity to the court.

Locatelli's *Sinfonia Funebre* was composed in Rome to commemorate a lady patron. Pisendel adapted this unusual and tragic funeral piece to fit the Dresden orchestra forces in church. Locatelli's original is for four-part strings. Pisendel expands this to include both winds and a large ripieno string band, saving the original four parts as concertante solo strings.

**Jan Dismas Zelenka** (1679–1745) was born in Bohemia and was musically educated in Prague and in Vienna under Johann Joseph Fux. He became a violone (bass) player in the Dresden court orchestra in 1710 and was also required to write music for the Catholic church, which was much admired. When Johann David Heinichen died in 1729, Zelenka became acting Kapellmeister. However, the Dresden court had been trying to establish Italian opera and had attracted Porpora to teach singing and had already offered Hasse the Kapellmeister post. Hasse had the great advantage of his famous wife.

*Per Singulos Dies* is from the larger of Zelenka's two settings of Te Deum (ZWV 146).

**Georg Phillip Telemann** (1681–1767) was one of the most prolific and popular composers of the baroque era and a personal friend of Bach and Handel. He was a life-long friend of Pisendel and as with Handel, they sent each other plants and gardening news. Telemann's music was promoted by Pisendel and regularly performed in Dresden with the excellence of the orchestra spurring him to ever more interesting compositions. After prominent positions around Germany, he settled in Hamburg in 1721 as director of music in the city's five main churches.

In sacred music, it was common for instrumental concertos to be adapted or used as single movement sinfonias or instrumental interludes, like the earlier Vivaldi Sinfonia. Telemann's Tafelmusik ('Table music') was around four hours'-worth of high quality orchestral suites, concertos and other instrumental pieces arranged in three 'Productions' conceived as incidental music for banquets or other events. The **Conclusion from Tafelmusik Part 1** was adapted by the Dresden court for use as a sacred sinfonia. And so, we drop it in as a prelude to Zelenka's *Nisi Dominus*.

Richard Austen writes: '*Nisi Dominus* is a single movement work for SATB but we have adapted it for female voices, carrying out the reverse of what Hasse did with *Laudate Pueri*. The choral lines are quite complex and harmonically daring, recalling Palestrina, while the orchestra is mainly in unison relentlessly iterating a repeated ostinato riff. This work appears to be a parody of an aria from Bononcini's opera *Polifemo (M'è si caro il vederti immortale)*, that Handel also borrowed from, but Zelenka develops the material a lot more and extends the music.'

And so, we end our whistle-stop musical journey between Venice and Dresden.



[www.gloriana.net](http://www.gloriana.net)

**Join the Linden Mailing list:**

**Linden Baroque Concerts for your diary in 2026:**

**March 21<sup>st</sup>** Bach St John Passion UCL School, Hampstead

**July 19<sup>th</sup>** St Stephen's **October 11<sup>th</sup>** St Stephen's

**October 25<sup>th</sup>** TBA **December 13<sup>th</sup>** St Stephen's

[www.lindenbaroque.org](http://www.lindenbaroque.org)



**Ashley Solomon, Musical Director, Linden Broque Orchestra**



Active as a soloist and chamber musician, Ashley is the director of Florilegium, and much of his time is spent working and performing with this ensemble that he co-founded in 1991. Since 2001 he has been its director. They have a busy touring schedule and each year performing at major international festivals and concert series throughout Europe as well as the Americas. Florilegium have been recording with Channel Classics since 1993 and have to date made 35 recordings, many of which have garnered international awards. They have given over 1,250 performances over the years and recently their 80<sup>th</sup> performance at London's Wigmore Hall.

As a soloist, he has performed worldwide, including concertos in the Sydney Opera House, Esplanade (Singapore), Teatro Colon (Buenos Aires), Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Konzerthaus (Vienna), Beethoven-Haus (Bonn), Handel-Haus (Halle) and Frick Collection (New York). He also records as a solo artist with Channel Classics and his recording of the complete Bach Flute Sonatas was voted the best overall version of these works on either modern or period flute by Gramophone Magazine (February 2017): *Solomon's luminous tone and unfussy command of the complicated melodies conflate into something utterly beautiful. Slow movements are soulful in their infinite variety, fast ones are clever and with a wealth of invention behind them.*

Since 2003 Ashley has been training vocalists and instrumentalists in Bolivia, working on the remarkable collection of music held in archives by the Moxos and Chiquitos Indians. He formed Arakaendar Bolivia Choir in 2005 and has directed them in concerts throughout North and South America, Europe and in the Far East and on their three cd recordings. In 2008 Ashley was the first European to receive the prestigious Bolivian Hans Roth Prize, given in recognition of the enormous assistance he has given the Bolivian native Indians, their presence on the international stage and the promotion and preservation of this music.

Combining a successful career across both theory and practice, Ashley Solomon is Head of Historical Performance at the Royal College of Music, having been appointed a professor in 1994. In 2014 he was awarded a Personal Chair and in July 2017 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music (FRAM) which was conferred on him by HRH Duchess of Gloucester. In 2019 he was also elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Music (FRCM) which was conferred on him by HRH Prince of Wales. Both Fellowships are in recognition of outstanding services to music. Since 2014 Ashley has been working closely with the Royal Collection Trust to curate musical performances in their Royal venues including Buckingham Palace (Queen's Gallery, Ballroom) at Windsor Castle and in the Queen's Chapel.

Ashley has recently been appointed a Patron for the Continuo Foundation.

**Deborah Miles-Johnson, Musical Director, Gloriana: Women in Harmony**



Deborah has had a diverse and exciting career as a singer, although she originally trained as a flautist at the Royal College of Music. She is a former member of the BBC Singers and has performed and recorded with The Sixteen, the Tallis Scholars and other consort groups and in the Extra Chorus at the Royal Opera House. Deborah has worked as vocal coach to the BBC Symphony Chorus and many other major London choirs. She also runs a series of choral workshops and in 2016 she formed Gloriana: Women in Harmony whom she has directed in numerous successful concerts, including two with her other choir, the prize-winning Imperial Male Voice Choir. Her diverse musical life includes contributions to the soundtrack of many popular films including *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*. She has a thriving teaching practice but increasingly focuses on playing the viola in string quartets and three orchestras as well as enjoying piano duets.

# GLORIANA

WOMEN IN HARMONY

Since its formation ten years ago by mezzo-soprano Deborah Miles-Johnson, Gloriana has given many well-received concerts in central London. We have sung in Rothschild & Co's glittering Sky Pavilion, at the Cabinet to mark International Women's Day, at the Mayor of London's Southward Cathedral carol service and for Classic FM. We have enjoyed exciting tours to Belgium and Northumberland. Members of the choir, drawn from top choruses and chamber choirs across London and the south, praise Deborah's energy, commitment and positive approach.

Some of the marvellous music written for women's voices can be heard on Gloriana's CD which is available at this concert.

## Soprano

Helena Ballard	Lynn Lacey
Margaret Gibson	Christine Leslie
Emily Jacks	Wendy Norman
Ruth James	Clare O'Sullivan
Jane Johnson	Alice Stevenson
Rachel Johnson	
Alice Knight	

## Alto

Caroline Davies	Celia Kent
Ann Flood	Anne Loveluck
Toni Gordon	Mary Maddison
Rachel Green	Miriam McKay
Pat Howell	Cecily Nicholls
Heidi Jost	Elizabeth Shirras
Caroline Kelly	Jo Tripp

## *Linden* baroque orchestra

### **Violin 1: Sara Deborah Timossi (leader),**

Anthony Ben Constantine, Gillian Taylor, Wendy Talbot, Ian Cutts, Anja Kuch

**Violin 2:** Michael Jenner, Alex Ait-Mansour, Alan Selwyn, Carolyn Liefkes-Skinner, Linda McDonald

**Viola:** John Sutherland, Deborah Miles-Johnson, Madison Marshall, Suzie Kim

**Cello:** Paul Woodmansterne, Giles Kennedy, Miranda Ford

**Double Bass:** Martin Johnson **Harp:** Ceci Keiffer **Bassoon:** Mathew Dart

**Flute:** Richard Austen, Aimee Taylor **Oboe:** Lysander Tennant, Simon Galton

**Linden Baroque** was formed around 42 years ago in the front room of a house in Linden Gardens, Chiswick. Unusually - and uniquely anywhere at that time - it combines the talents of young professionals, advanced students and amateurs and many members have moved on to have prominent careers in the early music field. The founding musical director was the well-known baroque oboist, Paul Goodwin. Now pursuing a busy international conducting career, Paul is Honorary President and was followed by Walter Reiter (ex-English Concert) and Steven Devine (Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) and now Ashley Solomon. Linden Baroque has played at venues from Norfolk to Rome (where it gave the first performances there of Purcell's *King Arthur*) and Berlin. Together with the Linden Baroque Choir we gave first modern performances of music by Jean Gilles and JF Fasch. Linden Baroque is a registered Charity (No 1014921) and is self-funding.