

**21.**  
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**Crescendo**  
Winner of Chorus America/ASCAP Alice Parker Award  
Christine Gevert, Founding Artistic Director  
**Season**



**“A Treasury of Harpsichord Music”**

Saturday, September 14, 2024 at 6:00 pm • United Methodist Church, Lakeville, CT

*This concert is partially underwritten by Leszek Wojcik.*

Support for the concerts has been provided to Crescendo by the Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development/Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) from the Connecticut State Legislature, and the NBT Bank.



# Program

## **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1759)**

- ∞ Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E-Flat major, BWV 998
- ∞ Fantasia in C minor, BWV 906

## **Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)**

- ∞ Sonata K.87
- ∞ Sonata K.96

## **Jacques Champion de Chambonnières (1602?-1672)**

- ∞ Sarabande in D minor

## **Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)**

- ∞ La Dauphine

## **François Couperin Le Grand (1668-1733)**

- ∞ Les Barricades Mystérieuses
- ∞ L'Arlequine

## **Henry Purcell (1658-1695)**

- ∞ Ground in C minor

## **Anonymous from the Virginal Book of Elizabeth Rogers**

- ∞ The Nightingale

## **George Frederick Handel (1685-1759)**

- ∞ Air and Doubles in E major "The Harmonious Blacksmith"

## **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

- ∞ Rondo in D major K.485  
*Rondo alla Turca*
- ∞ Menuet in D major K.355

## **Johann Sebastian Bach / Antonio Vivaldi**

- ∞ Concerto in D major  
(-), *Larghetto*, *Allegro*

## About the Music

The selection of works on today's program is the recreation of the landmark 1957 "A Treasury of Harpsichord Music" recording of Wanda Landowska. Kenneth Weiss writes about Landowska's trajectory: As a ten year old child prodigy, Wanda Landowska visited the 1889 World Exhibition in Paris where she likely saw her first harpsichord. The leading French piano builders Erard and Pleyel specially built harpsichords for an event that marked the 100th year anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. It is perhaps at this moment that her very early interest in the music of J.S. Bach, and the discovery of the instrument for which he wrote his music, came together to take her on a decisive and trailblazing path: reviving the harpsichord and its repertoire of unknown treasures.

Landowska is clear in her writings and interviews that she needed to fight tirelessly for the acceptance of the instrument, and the quality of its repertoire. Although it seems impossible to imagine today, she was up against the early 20th century view that music, like science, progressed, and its quality improved throughout each era. She questioned established thought, and proved that the qualitative nature of music—and art—has nothing to do with progress. What she achieved was remarkable, and her influence on the worldwide renaissance of interest in Early Music is staggering. As a teacher and musicologist she advised her students and famed collaborators on the pertinent stylistic knowledge necessary to access this repertoire that was totally unknown at the time. As a player, she was perhaps the most widely celebrated soloist of the first half of the 20th century, entrancing devoted audiences through her fearless, decisive, and electrifying musical personality.



**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1759)** Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E-Flat major, BWV 998 | Fantasia in C minor, BWV 906  
Only a small portion of Bach's music was printed during his lifetime. But among those are mainly his keyboard works, for which he became known to his contemporaries. The Prelude, Fugue, and Allegro in E-flat major, BWV 998, was written around 1735 for lute harpsichord. The original manuscript was sold at Christie's on July 13, 2016, for £2,518,500. The prelude is similar to many in the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (the second book of which dates from around the same time as this work), in that it is composed of many arpeggios. The Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 906 was probably composed sometime during his tenure in Leipzig (1723–1750). The work survives in two autograph scores, one with the fantasia alone, and the other, believed to have been penned around 1738 in which the fugue is incomplete. The piece is notable for being one of Bach's latest compositions in the prelude and fugue format, and for being a showcase of Bach trying his hand at the emerging galant and empfindsam (*sensibility*) styles of music that his sons were known to compose.

**Domenico Scarlatti (1665-1757)** Sonata K.87 | Sonata K.96  
The Italian composer Domenico Scarlatti spent much of his life in the service of the Portuguese and Spanish royal families. Like his renowned father Alessandro Scarlatti, he composed in a variety of musical forms, although today he is known mainly for his 555 keyboard sonatas, written for harpsichord, clavichord and fortepiano. Circulated irregularly in his lifetime, these are now recognized as a significant contribution which pushed the musical and technical standards of keyboard music. Scarlatti's music was influential in the development of the Classical style.

### **Jacques Champion de Chambonnières (1602?-1672) Sarabande in D minor**

Chambonnières was a French harpsichordist, dancer and composer. Born into a musical family, Chambonnières made an illustrious career as court harpsichordist in Paris and was considered by many of his contemporaries to be one of the greatest musicians in Europe. However, late in life Chambonnières gradually fell out of favor at the court and lost his position. He died in poverty, but at an advanced age, and not before publishing a number of his works. Today Chambonnières is considered one of the greatest representatives of the early French harpsichord school.

### **Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) La Dauphine**

Rameau was regarded as one of the most important French composers and music theorists of the 18th century. He replaced Jean-Baptiste Lully as the dominant composer of French opera and is also considered the leading French composer of his time for the harpsichord, alongside François Couperin. *La Dauphine* (1747) traditionally is considered as a notation of an improvisation in honor of the marriage of Marie-Joséphine of Saxony with Louis de France (first Louis XV's son)

### **François Couperin (1668-1733) Les Barricades Mystérieuses (*The Mysterious Barricades*) | L'Arlequine (*The Clown*)**

François Couperin was a French Baroque composer, organist and harpsichordist. He was known as Couperin le Grand ("Couperin the Great") to distinguish him from other members of the musically talented Couperin family. Couperin's four volumes of harpsichord music, published in Paris between 1713 and 1730, contain over 230 pieces, and he also published a book of *Concerts Royaux* which can be played as solo harpsichord pieces or as small chamber works. His most famous book, *L'art de toucher le clavecin*, contains suggestions for fingerings, touch, ornamentation and other features of keyboard technique. His keyboard compositions were admired by Johann Sebastian Bach, who exchanged letters with Couperin, and later by Brahms and by Ravel, the latter of whom memorialized the composer in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. Many of Couperin's keyboard pieces have evocative, picturesque titles, and express a mood through key choices, adventurous harmonies and (resolved) discords. They have been likened to miniature tone poems. These features attracted Richard Strauss, who orchestrated some of them.

### **Henry Purcell (1658-1695) Ground in C minor**

Henry Purcell has been assessed with John Dunstaple and William Byrd as England's most important early music composer. Purcell's musical style was uniquely English, although it incorporated Italian and French elements. Organist at Westminster Abbey, and at the Chapel Royal, he wrote sacred and secular music. His first printed composition, *Twelve Sonatas*, was published in 1683. Purcell worked in many genres, both in works closely linked to the court, such as symphony song, to the Chapel Royal, such as the symphony anthem, and the theatre. Among Purcell's most notable works are his opera *Dido and Aeneas* (1688), his semi-operas *Dioclesian* (1690), *King Arthur* (1691), *The Fairy-Queen* (1692) and *Timon of Athens* (1695), as well as the compositions *Hail! Bright Cecilia* (1692), *Come Ye Sons of Art* (1694) and *Funeral Sentences and Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary* (1695).

### **Anonymous from the Virginal Book of Elizabeth Rogers The Nightingale**

Elizabeth Rogers' *Virginal Book* is a musical commonplace book compiled in the mid-seventeenth century by a person or persons so far unidentified. Of all the so-called English "virginal books" this is the only one to mention the name of the instrument (the virginal) in the title, the others being so-called at a far later date. The pieces contained in the manuscript are relatively simple, and written for the amateur performer. There are settings of popular tunes, dance movements and vocal pieces. None of the keyboard pieces bear a composer's name, and only a few of the vocal pieces are attributed, but many are identifiable from other sources. These include: William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, Henry Lawes, and his brother William, Robert Johnson; and Nicholas Lanier.

### **George Frederick Handel (1685-1759) Air and Doubles in E major "The Harmonious Blacksmith"**

The German-British Baroque composer is well known for his operas, oratorios, anthems, concerti grossi, and organ concertos. Handel received his training in Halle and worked as a composer in Hamburg and Italy before settling in London in 1712, where he spent the bulk of his career and became a naturalised British subject in 1727. He was strongly influenced both by the middle-German polyphonic choral tradition and by composers of the Italian Baroque. In turn, Handel's music forms one of the peaks of the "high baroque" style, bringing Italian opera to its highest development, creating the genres of English oratorio and organ concerto, and introducing a new style into English church music. He is consistently recognized as one of the greatest composers of his age. Among his notable compositions are his 16 keyboard suites, especially "The Harmonious Blacksmith".

### **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Rondo in D major K.485 | Menuet in D major K.355**

Mozart was a prolific composer who wrote in many genres. Perhaps his best-admired works can be found within the categories of operas, piano concertos, piano sonatas, symphonies, string quartets, and string quintets. Mozart also wrote many violin sonatas; other forms of chamber music; violin concertos, and other concertos for one or more solo instruments; masses, and other religious music; organ music; masonic music; and numerous dances, marches, divertimentos, serenades, and other forms of light entertainment. Mozart's earliest composition attempts begin with piano sonatas and other piano pieces, as this is the instrument on which his musical education took place. Almost everything that he wrote for piano was intended to be played by himself (or by his sister, also a proficient piano player). Between 1782 and 1786, Mozart wrote 20 works for piano solo (including sonatas, variations, fantasias, suites, fugues, rondo) and works for piano four hands and two pianos.

## Johann Sebastian Bach / Antonio Vivaldi Concerto in D major

The concerto transcriptions of Johann Sebastian Bach date from his second period at the court in Weimar (1708–1717). Bach transcribed for organ and harpsichord a number of Italian and Italianate concertos, mainly by Antonio Vivaldi, but with others by Alessandro Marcello, Benedetto Marcello, Georg Philipp Telemann and the musically talented Prince Johann Ernst of Saxe-Weimar. It is thought that most of the transcriptions were probably made in 1713–1714. Their publication by C.F. Peters in the 1850s and by Breitkopf & Härtel in the 1890s played a decisive role in the Vivaldi revival of the twentieth century. The Concerto in D major is an arrangement of a violin concerto, RV 230; op. 3 no. 9, by Antonio Vivaldi.

### Sources

Wikipedia articles: List of compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach printed during his lifetime; Prelude, Fugue, and Allegro in E-flat major, BWV 998; Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 906; Domenico Scarlatti; List of solo keyboard sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti; Jacques Champion de Chambonnières; Jean-Philippe Rameau; François Couperin; Henry Purcell; Elizabeth Rogers' Virginal Book; George Frideric Handel; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart; Weimar concerto transcriptions (Bach)

Imslp.org: La Dauphine, RCT 12 (Rameau, Jean-Philippe);

## The Performer

**Harpichordist Kenneth Weiss** was born in New York City where he attended the High School of Performing Arts. After studying with Lisa Goode Crawford at the Oberlin Conservatory he continued with Gustav Leonhardt at the Sweelinck Conservatorium in Amsterdam.

From 1990-1993 he was Musical Assistant to William Christie at Les Arts Florissants for numerous opera productions and recordings. He later conducted Les Arts Florissants in *'Doux Mensonges'* by the choreographer Jiri Kylian at the Paris Opera, and was co-director with William Christie of the first three editions of Les Arts Florissants' *'Jardin de Voix'* program. Kenneth Weiss focuses on recitals, chamber music, teaching and conducting. His most recent recitals include Nuremburg, Montpellier, Barcelona, Dijon, Geneva, Antwerp, the Cite de la musique and Théâtre des Abbesses in Paris, Théâtre de Caen, Madrid, La Roque d'Anthéron, Santander, Lisbon, San Sebastian, Innsbruck, Santiago de Compostela, La Chaise-Dieu, La Chaud de Fonds, Bruges and New York, Nishinomiya, Kugenuma and Tokyo.

Kenneth is a regular performer with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He also performs in the Berkshire Bach Ensemble's 'Bach at New Year's' concerts with Eugene Drucker, and the summer Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival. In 2024 Kenneth makes his début appearance at the prestigious Music@Menlo chamber music festival in San Francisco. He performs in recital with the violinists Fabio Biondi, Daniel Hope, Monica Huggett and Lina Tur Bonet, the cellist Marc Coppey and mandolinist Avi Avital.

In collaboration with the choreographer Trisha Brown, Kenneth Weiss was musical director of *'M.O.'*, a ballet on Bach's *Musical Offering*, first performed at La Monnaie in Brussels. He was also musical director of the Aix-en-Provence European Music Academy's staged productions of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and a Monteverdi madrigal program. Both productions were revived at the Lille, Monte-Carlo and Bordeaux operas. He has conducted staged performances of Mozart's *Mariage of Figaro* at the Cité de la musique in Paris and Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* in Bilbao and Oviedo. He has also conducted The English Concert, Concerto Copenhagen, Orquesta de Salamanca, Divino Sospiro, Orchestre de Rouen, the Orchestre régional de Basse-Normandie, Orchestre National des Pays de Loire, the Orchestre des Pays de Savoie and the Orchestre d'Auvergne.



Kenneth Weiss. Photo by Jenny Gorman

In 2023 he performed Bach's *Art of Fugue* in Berkeley, the festivals of Saint-Savin, Laon (Bach / Leipzig 1723 - 2023 series), Santiago de Compostela, Aranjuez and in the Théâtre du Musée Grévin, Paris. Highlights of the 2023-24 season include performances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Berkshire Bach Society, Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, North County Chamber Players, Music@Menlo, and recitals of Bach's *Art of Fugue* in Jerusalem, the Saintes Festival in France and the Santander Festival in Spain. He also conducts Orchestre National Avignon-Provence with the *Brandenburg concertos*. The 2024-25 season sees the release of a new Bach Trio Sonata transcriptions recording with flutist Sooyun Kim, a return to Lincoln Center with the *Brandenburg concertos*, a tour of Australia with violinist Lina Tur Bonet, an *Art of Fugue* recital at the Palau de la Música in Barcelona and the debut of a new recital program "A Handful of Keys", celebrating keyboard ingenuity and innovations with works spanning the Baroque Sonata to Ragtime.

In 2001 Satirino records released the first in a series of highly acclaimed solo harpsichord recordings by Kenneth Weiss: Bach's Partitas, Scarlatti Sonatas, Rameau Opera and Ballet transcriptions (on two of the historical instruments in the Musée de la musique in Paris), an album including Bach's Italian Concerto, French Overture and the Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, Scarlatti's 'Essercizi per gravicembalo' in coproduction with the Madrid Caja Bank's Spanish music label, Los SIGLOS de ORO, a live recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations, two live recordings of selections from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, 'A Cleare Day' and 'Heaven & Earth', and Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier recorded at the Cité de la musique in Paris on the historic Ruckers-Taskin instrument belonging to the Musée de la musique, a recording that has been widely acclaimed and awarded a "Choc" in the French magazine Classica. He has also recorded the violin sonatas of Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre with the violinist Lina Tur Bonet for the Pan Classics label. In October 2018 Kenneth Weiss gave the inaugural recital on the recently restored Taskin harpsichord belonging to the Museu da Música in Lisbon. It is on this instrument that he records Bach's *Art of Fugue* in May 2021 at the Centro Cultural de Belém for the Paraty label. The album was awarded a *Diapason d'Or* in March 2023.

Kenneth Weiss has held teaching positions at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, the Juilliard School in New York and the Geneva Haute école de musique. He currently teaches at the Paris Conservatory and where he is professor of chamber music.

## *Crescendo and its programming*

Crescendo is a national-award-winning music performance organization. Now in its 21<sup>st</sup> season, Crescendo has presented concerts year-round in northwestern Connecticut, the Berkshires, and the mid-Hudson Valley of New York. The organization is based at Trinity Church Lime Rock in Lakeville, CT.

Founder and Artistic Director, Christine Gevert, is celebrated for her innovative approach to programming and performance. Crescendo's audiences are often rewarded with programs of rarely-heard and newly discovered works. Often Ms. Gevert uses original manuscripts to make her own performing editions for chorus, soloists and orchestra because there are no existing published editions. Frequently our programs feature early and contemporary music works alongside each other, creating a contrast for the listener. Eight new works have been commissioned for our chorus and vocal ensemble. The most notable among these is John Myers' "The West Lake Cycle", central work of the program that was awarded the Chorus America/ASCAP Alice Parker Award in 2014. Crescendo has presented ten U.S. premieres. Visual and other arts are part of Crescendo's programs also. Dancers, actors and graphic artists collaborate with Crescendo in multimedia performances that range from visually portraying polyphony in Monteverdi's works by contemporary dancers, to projected animations of European ancient Dance of Death murals, and modern paintings, such as works by Norman Rockwell.

Crescendo's innovative programming relies on a local base of dedicated and talented auditioned amateurs and professionals who make up the Crescendo Chorus and Crescendo Vocal Ensemble. Crescendo has its own Period Instrument Orchestra and Andean Ensemble, comprised of professionals from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC and Hartford. These instrumentalists and the internationally recognized soloists who regularly collaborate with Crescendo, and raise the performances to a level beyond what would be expected of a community organization. Instrumental ensembles, and specialized vocal soloists have been part of Crescendo's programs since the beginning. Some of these performers are: Julianne Baird, soprano, Nicholas Tamagna, countertenor, Pablo Bustos, tenor, Douglas Williams, baritone Peter Sykes (Boston) and Władysław Kłosiewicz, harpsichord, Christopher Belluscio, natural trumpet, Tricia van Oers, recorder, *I Fagiolini* Renaissance Vocal Ensemble, L'Orchestre de Chambre Française, Edson Scheid, Judson Griffin, Jörg-Michael Schwarz, Peter Lekx, baroque violin, Rodrigo Tarraza, traverso, and *Duo Alturas*, ensemble of Andean instruments.

Crescendo is committed to educational, and community outreach—to our own singers, our audiences and local students. Talented local high school singers and young music students are coached by Ms. Gevert as part of our "Young Artist Program", and often play a part in our performances. She and members of the chorus visit local schools to work with students. And over the years Crescendo Chorus and instrumentalists have also performed in some unusual settings: perhaps this fall and winter you will find the group performing Renaissance motets and traditional holiday music for cows, donkeys or horses at a barn or animal sanctuary in the tri-state area.

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**Sat., October 5, 2024 at 6 pm** Trinity Church, Lakeville, CT

**Sun., October 6, 2024 at 4 pm** Saint James Place, Great Barrington, MA

Antonio Vivaldi conveyed the beauty and dramatic conflicts of nature in his instrumental music with an intensity unparalleled by his contemporaries. In the violin concerto "Tempesta di mare" (the storm at sea), and the flute concertos "La notte" (The Night), and "Il gardellino" (The Goldfinch) Vivaldi again demonstrates how adept he is in using the solo instruments, and the unique affects and atmospheres their sounds evoke. While Vivaldi doesn't have a direct connection with Latin America, the Baroque music of Western Europe was widely performed there, introduced by the Jesuits. Vivaldi's concerto for two mandolins will be performed on Iberian colonial and native instruments, giving our listeners a taste of the fusion of traditional and folk instruments that might have been heard in the New World.

Edson Scheid, Baroque violin, Rodrigo Tarraza, traverso, Carlos Boltes, charango, and Scott Hill, guitar, with strings and basso continuo players of Crescendo Period Instrument orchestra, directed by Christine Gevert

**Sat., December 28, 2024 at 4 pm** Trinity Church, Lakeville, CT

**Sun., December 29, 2024 at 4 pm** Saint James Place, Great Barrington, MA

Johann Sebastian Bach's fifth cantata "Ehre sei dir, Gott, gesungen" (Let honor be sung to you, O God) of his *Christmas Oratorio* is at the center of this Baroque Holiday program. The other composers in Bach's circle include his mentor Dietrich Buxtehude, who wrote innovative and rhapsodic music. His New Year's and Johann Schelle's Advent cantatas lead into some of the most festive Baroque Christmas cantatas for chorus, soloists and orchestra by Johann Rosenmüller (his *Magnificat*), Jeremias du Grain, and Philip Erlebach. In contrast to this stand intimate unaccompanied choral works by the contemporary female composers Emily Drum, and MaryAnne Muglia (U.S.), and Christine Donkin (Canada).

Crescendo Chorus, and soloists, with Paulina Francisco, soprano, Nicholas Tamagna, countertenor, Douglas Williams, bass, and Crescendo Period Instrument Orchestra, led by Christine Gevert

**Sat., March 1, 2025 at 4 pm** Trinity Church, Lakeville, CT

**Sun., March 2, 2025 at 4 pm** Saint James Place, Great Barrington, MA

This program features motets by the Portuguese composer Vicente Lusitano, one of the earliest known mixed-race composers of African descent, whose works were published in his lifetime. Lusitano's style resembles Josquin des Prez', and is highly complex and of extraordinary beauty. We still know very little about female composers of those times, as it was stigmatized for women to perform in public, or be known as composers. We present sacred and secular vocal and instrumental works by Maddalena Casulana (*Madrigali 1570*), Raffaella Aleotti (*Sacrae cantiones*, Venice 1593), Claudia Sessa (*Canti sacri*), and Claudia Francesca Rusca (*Sacri Concerti*), an Italian nun composer, singer, and organist.

Crescendo Vocal Ensemble is joined by Christa Patton, harp and recorder, and is led by Christine Gevert from the organ

**Sat., May 10, 2025 at 6 pm** Trinity Church, Lakeville, CT

**Sun., May 11, 2025 at 4 pm** Saint James Place, Great Barrington, MA

Roman composer Emilio de' Cavalieri wrote and premiered his groundbreaking work *Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo* with great success in 1600. The question remains, whether this work is considered an opera or an oratorio (sacred drama)! The subject, an allegorical drama, is a lively debate over worldly vanities versus a spiritual life. It

features six allegorical figures: *Anima*, the Soul (soprano), *Corpo*, the Body (baritone), Good Counsel (bass), Intellect (tenor), Time (bass), Pleasure (mezzo-soprano), and a chorus that comments on the action, accompanied by a chamber orchestra. Arias, recitativos, ensemble pieces and dance alternate to create a varied and dramatic and entertaining representation of the plot. This is something that we take for granted now, as we are so used to this format in opera, cantata, oratorio, and also the popular contemporary musicals.

Crescendo Chorus, Soloists and Period Instrument Orchestra, led by Christine Gevert



*Crescendo Chorus and Period Instrument Orchestra at Saint James Place, Great Barrington, MA - Photo by Steve Potter*

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