

# Baroque bassoonist Dominic Teresi

in conversation with Elizabeth Blumenstock

*Our artistic director, Elizabeth Blumenstock, talked with Baroque bassoonist Dominic Teresi, who is appearing in the 2020 Baroque Music Festival's Winter Musicale, "Winds of the Western World."*

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**EB** How did you find the bassoon? (Or was it was the other way around?)

**DT** I was actually a late starter on the bassoon and I didn't take it up until university. As a child I started out playing the saxophone and piano, but I also really wanted to play in orchestra—and the bassoon was a logical way to do that for me. I was first introduced to early music performance during my graduate studies at Yale. When I finally got my hands on an actual Baroque bassoon, I was struck by how playing on a period instrument brought the music to life in ways I hadn't before imagined. Playing this instrument was a real revelation.

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**EB** How would you describe the differences between the modern and Baroque bassoons?

**DT** The main visual difference between the Baroque and modern bassoons is the number of keys. My Baroque instrument has five keys, whereas my modern has 24. An equally important difference that you can't see is the shape of the bore, or inside of the bassoon. A Baroque bassoon has a larger bore than the modern instrument, which gives it a warmer, rounder sound that's especially beautiful for playing continuo lines. The narrow, hard-rubber-lined bore of a modern bassoon makes it more of a tenor voice that can project very well in a big modern orchestra. Also, my Baroque reeds are much larger than my modern, further contributing to the warm, flexible sound of the earlier instrument.

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**EB**

**Which Baroque composers do you feel wrote best for the bassoon, and why?**

**DT**

Some of my favorite Baroque bassoon composers are Vivaldi, Fasch and Rameau. They all wrote so prolifically and idiomatically for the instrument.

We bassoonists are incredibly lucky to have almost 40 concertos by Vivaldi, which are, by and large, all unique and range in expression from soulful to virtuosic to quirky. Fasch wrote piles of ensemble sonatas and orchestral works with great obbligato bassoon lines that show off the instrument well and are really fun to play. Perhaps the most gratifying Baroque music of all to play for a bassoonist is that of Rameau's operas. He clearly loved the bassoon and really knew how to exploit its unique color and range.

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**EB**

**If you were to pick another instrument to learn now, which would you pick, and why?**

**DT**

I would enjoy playing the sackbut. I love the gorgeous sound of a group of sackbuts playing Schütz or Monteverdi.



For the Festival's 40th season, Dominic Teresi is featured in our Winter Musicale "Winds of the Western World" concert, in which he performs Vivaldi's *Concerto for Bassoon in A minor*, RV 498, and chamber concertos by Fasch and Telemann. Sunday, February 16, 2020 at 5 p.m., St. Mark Presbyterian Church, Newport Beach, CA. For information about the Winter Musicale, our annual fundraising event, and the 2020 Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar, visit the Festival website.

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