



April 2026 — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The **Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar**, invites you to immerse yourself in the powerful impact of harmonic expression with **Bright Cecilia: The Power of Harmony**. Through programs expertly curated and led by artistic director-violinist **Elizabeth Blumenstock**—and inspired by the patron saint of music, Saint Cecilia—featured soloists and the Festival Orchestra and Chorus bring the community professional, historically-informed, interpretations of **Handel’s *Ode for St. Cecilia’s Day*, Bach sonatas, music by an ancestor of a current Festival patron, Parisian ballets, Italian concertos** and more, in five concerts over eight days.

NEWPORT BEACH—the **Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar**, Newport Beach’s longstanding series, and still the city’s only exclusively classical-music-performing professional arts organization, returns after its 2025 sold-out Vivaldi-Fest with a “Harmony-Fest” for its **46th Annual Season, June 21-28**. In this enjoyable and educational boutique series of accessible concerts, specialists present 17th- and 18th-century masterpieces close to how their composers would have intended them to be heard, at intimate venues in **Corona del Mar and Newport Beach**.

Internationally recognized Baroque violinist Elizabeth Blumenstock directs the series, her 16th as artistic director, leading all performances. She performs globally as a soloist and concertmaster on a 17th-century Guarneri baroque violin (Cremona, 1660) generously on loan to her from the Philharmonia Baroque Period Instrument Trust.

The 2026 Festival opens and closes with Sunday afternoon concerts at St. Mark, Newport Beach, by the Festival Orchestra, joined for the Finale by vocal soloists and the Festival Chorus. ***Parisian Pleasures*** launches listeners into the “Power of Harmony” theme from the very first chord of the Festival, with a movement provocatively named “Chaos.” The groundbreaking opening of Jean-Féry Rebel’s *Les Éléments* orchestral suite is a world away from Handel’s “Heavenly Harmony” of his *Ode for St. Cecilia’s Day* in the Festival’s Finale. They are, however, equally varied, richly-scored, and engaging. Leclair’s Vivaldi-inspired A-minor violin concerto, and a plethora of toe-tapping *suites de ballets* from operas by Marais and Rameau, complete the opener in a theatrical, celebratory fashion.

Featured artists give three evening concerts between the Sunday events. Monday’s recital, ***A Cöthen Chamber: Bach Sonatas***, highlights the acoustics of St. Michael & All Angels, Corona del Mar, in a rare performance by Blumenstock and soloist Matthew Dirst of three of Bach’s masterly sonatas for violin and obbligato harpsichord. Music for both organ and harpsichord by a Bach predecessor, Johann Caspar Kerll, also features. Amazingly, a direct descendant of Kerll is among our patrons! Wednesday brings a little night music to the oasis of **Sherman Library & Gardens**, a Festival venue since 1981. ***Concerti D’Italia in the Gardens*** features recorder (soloist Judith Linsenbergl) and string concertos by Vivaldi and other Italians. On Friday the series returns to St. Mark, Newport Beach, for **A Spanish Salón: Chamber Music Night**—guitar and string quintets by Boccherini, including his famous “Fandango” quintet, plus solo guitar music. Guitarist Marc Teicholz returns following his sold-out recital in 2019.

The 46th series concludes with ***Festival Finale: St. Cecilia’s Day!*** featuring international soloists **Hannah De Priest** (soprano) and **Nicholas Phan** (tenor) with the Festival’s eight-voiced specialist Baroque chorus and its orchestra. Harmony is brought full circle with **Handel’s ode to the glory of music itself**—a lavish setting of John Dryden’s 1687 poem “A Song for St. Cecilia” with set pieces that fittingly showcase *all* the Festival’s musicians, among them solo flute, solo cello, lute, organ, trumpets, and timpani. Not to be missed!

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Information and Tickets

In addition to the ticketed concerts, the Festival invites audiences to enjoy Baroque music *al fresco* by **South Coast Brass**, beginning 45 minutes before each concert. At all performances, audience members and musicians are encouraged to mingle for conversation and refreshment at complimentary “wine and waters” receptions.

- **Subscriptions:** \$350 for all five concerts. Price includes reservable premium seating at each concert and a private catered post-concert dinner following the Festival Finale on Sunday, June 28th.
- **Single Tickets:** Ranging from \$50 to \$60 for individual concerts, plus a \$5 processing fee per order, for open seating behind the premium section.
- **Students *Go for Baroque* Rush Tickets for Under-30s (age 12 and above):** \$10 on the day of performance only, cash preferred, with a valid student card and photo ID. Please email students@bmf-cdm.org for further information, and to inquire about group bookings and our open dress rehearsals for students. **For NMUSD families** – thanks to generous support from the City of Newport Beach (Cultural Arts Grant), the adult accompanying any NMUSD student(s) age 12 or over is also eligible for the \$10 rush ticket rate.
- **How to purchase:** via bmf-cdm.org or by calling (949) 760-7887 and leaving a message for a callback.

The Baroque Music Festival was founded in 1981 by Dr. Burton Karson (1934-2025), then Professor of Music at CSU Fullerton. The annual season of five June concerts is a high-quality musical experience and an accessible way to discover, enjoy, and learn more about a wide variety of beautiful Baroque-era European music (written from around 1600 to around 1750) in its socio-historical context, right in the heart of the local community. Over the past four decades, the Festival has evolved as a respected and popular cultural institution in Orange County. Performing on period instruments in intimate settings, acclaimed professional musicians gather each June in Corona del Mar and Newport Beach, frequently playing to sold-out crowds. Since 2025 the Festival has added the Burton Karson Music Education Program, funded in part by the Burton Karson Music Education Fund. For details of both, please visit bmf-cdm.org/education-fund-program/

Concertgoers have described Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar’s performances as “rapturous” and “riveting”; reviews from the *Los Angeles Times*, *Orange County Register* and others have praised the Festival throughout its long and illustrious history. The Festival Board of Directors remains committed to bringing inspirational Baroque music to Newport Beach every summer.

Interviews:

Artistic Director Elizabeth Blumenstock, and Johann Caspar Kerll descendants are available for phone, video and email interviews on request.

Visit bmf-cdm.org for:

- **Press Kit** <https://bmf-cdm.org/press-kit/> **Password: telemann** (all lower case)
- **Concert Listings** <https://bmf-cdm.org/2026-programs/>
- **Tickets** <https://bmf-cdm.org/tickets/>
- **Biographies** <https://bmf-cdm.org/performers/>
- **Images** <http://bmf-cdm.org/gallery/>
(Please email us the thumbnail of the landscape image you wish to use to receive a full resolution file)
- **Festival History** <https://bmf-cdm.org/festival-history/>

Over for concert listings/

Bright Cecilia: The Power of Harmony
46th Annual Season, Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar
June 21-28, 2026

Sunday, June 21, 4 p.m. – St. Mark Presbyterian Church, Newport Beach

Parisian Pleasures

After her stunning Vivaldi's Four Seasons in 2025, another rare opportunity to hear Elizabeth Blumenstock (and her 1660 Guarneri Baroque violin) as concerto soloist—this year in one of Leclair's Vivaldi-inspired violin concertos. Plus, delightful and surprising suites by Rebel, Marais and Rameau.

Followed by a wine & waters reception on the patio with the musicians

Monday, June 22, 7:30 p.m. – St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Corona del Mar

A Cöthen Chamber: Bach Sonatas

Masterly Bach sonatas featuring the violin and harpsichord as soloistic partners. Plus, works by the 17th-century keyboard virtuoso and notable Bach forerunner Johann Caspar Kerll performed on harpsichord and on the beautifully restored St. Michael's pipe organ. In the excellent acoustics of St. Michael and All Angels Church—the Festival's "small church" home since the beginning of the Festival.

Followed by a wine & waters reception with the musicians

Wednesday, June 24, 7:30 p.m. – Sherman Library & Gardens, Corona del Mar

Concerti D'Italia in the Gardens

Gates open at 6:45 p.m. for complimentary wine in the Gardens · Intermission coffee & cookies · Meet the musicians after the concert

A magical evening in the semi-outdoor setting of Sherman Library & Gardens' central patio room, with music spilling out onto the central lawn beyond. Come for the pre-concert complimentary wine and waters while you stroll around the fountain and admire the succulent garden beyond, and stay for exquisite Italian Baroque chamber concerti by Vivaldi and other Venetian, Neapolitan and Milanese composers.

Friday, June 26, 7:30 p.m. – St. Mark Presbyterian Church, Newport Beach

A Spanish Salón: Chamber Music Night!

Patio opens at 6:45 p.m. for complimentary wine & waters · Intermission coffee & cookies · Meet the musicians after the concert

Friday's chamber music night this year is dedicated to music by an 18th-century Italian cellist and composer who made his life in Madrid and was inspired by colorful Spanish traditions. Luigi Boccherini's "Fandango" and E Minor Quintets for guitar (Marc Teicholz) and strings are partnered with his miniature quartet "La Tiranna" and Catalan composer Fernando Sor's "Introduction and Variations on Gentil Housard" for solo guitar.

Sunday, June 29, 4 p.m. – St. Mark Presbyterian Church, Newport Beach

Festival Finale: St. Cecilia's Day!

Followed by a wine & waters reception on the patio with the musicians

A grand choral Finale celebrating music itself—the power of harmony and more. With international in-demand lyric tenor Nicholas Phan and "luminous" soprano soloist Hannah De Priest, this year's Festival closer is not to be missed.

FULL PROGRAM INFORMATION AND PERFORMER LISTS AT **BMF-CDM.ORG**
PROGRAM AND ARTISTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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