Woodpeckers Recorder Quartet
‘Bach & the Birds’

A concert performance for all ages



Concert information 2024-25

About us...



Woodpeckers are a dynamic group of virtuoso recorder players who share a common interest in performing and promoting both very old and very new music for their instrument. They met while studying together at Stockholm's Royal College of Music, and it became apparent early on that they were well suited as both friends and fellow chamber musicians. All four members have gained recognition on an international level, performing, touring and recording as soloists and together with some of Europe's leading Baroque and contemporary music ensembles. As a group, Woodpeckers have performed at festivals and venues throughout Europe, making numerous radio and television appearances on the way.

As well as focusing on original and arranged Baroque repertoire for the recorder, Woodpeckers aim to present the instrument in a new and interesting light. There are ongoing collaborations with several composers to produce new music for the group, with the aim of pushing the boundaries of the instrument. With Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Irish backgrounds, each member of Woodpeckers has something unique to offer and their programming often includes aspects of the folk repertoire from each of their respective countries. Their first cd as a group, entitled 'Borrowed, not Stolen...' was released on the Norwegian label LAWO Classics in the summer of 2023.

At the forefront of Woodpeckers ideology is the drive to kick the age-old image of the recorder being merely a stepping-stone to something else, and they are intent on spreading their knowledge far and wide, be it through videos, recordings, workshops, teaching, research, and of course, live concerts. An integral part of their mission involves working with children and young people, and Woodpeckers have performed live for thousands of small ears, from newborn babies, to toddlers, to teenagers, to composition students. The energy they get in return has fuelled their pursuit and sparked many wonderful ideas that they are sure will keep them on the road and having fun for years to come.

The musicians...

Caroline Eidsten Dahl (Norway)
www.carolineeidstendahl.com

Katarina Widell (Sweden)
www.katarinawidell.com

Kate Hearne (ireland)
www.katehearne.com

Pernille Petersen (Denmark)
www.pernillepetersen.dk

Woodpeckers on YouTube:
www.youtube.com/@WoodpeckersQuartet

Woodpeckers on Spotify:
https://open.spotify.com/album/2Eb4BZzExhkA0Gi1aHE8C3?si=dlw7ibsfR2WR_-LOjAFKkQ



Caroline

Katarina





Kate

Pernille



The concert...

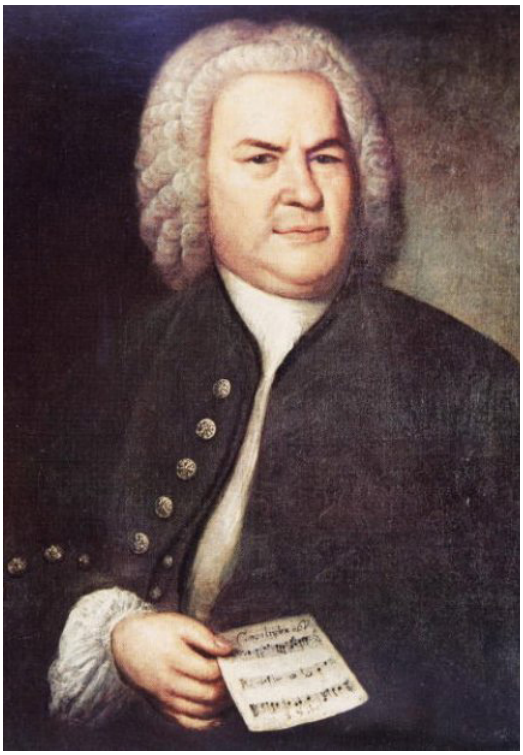
The four virtuoso players of Woodpeckers present an exciting, choreographed presentation of music written for the recorder spanning over 600 years, from the 15th to the the 21st century. Throughout the concert, our young audience will get the chance to hear and see many different sizes of recorders at close range. Our aim is to inspire and ignite curiosity in our audience, giving them a long-lasting joy of live music.

The programme is presented without spoken word, where the instruments and music weave a story of conflict, friendship & reconciliation through improvisation and carefully chosen works. To conclude, we give a short presentation of ourselves and our instruments, with time for questions after the concert. Performing everything from memory means we can be more communicative and spontaneous, moving unhindered among our audience. The programme takes on an arc shape, beginning and ending very calmly, building up to musical climax shortly before the end, which after many concerts and experimentation we have found to be perfect the perfect form for focus and concentration. Works by the Baroque masters Bach and Vivaldi are presented alongside old folk melodies and dance tunes from each of our respective countries: Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Ireland, together with new music inspired by bird and animal sounds, tied together with improvised interludes.

The programme was originally produced and choreographed by Norway's Rikskonsertene, and over the years it has developed, tweaked and tailored into its current form. We have performed in many different, and some extreme, circumstances, from concerts for just 5 children in the wilds of Northern Norway, the West of Ireland and remote spots on the Faroe Islands, to packed out gym halls with hundreds of children. 15 years of experience playing together and touring means that we are very flexible and can adapt to any situation! As a testimony to it's success, we are delighted that 'Bach and the Birds' (Kvittrande Klanger in Scandinavian) was nominated as one of three finalists in the 'best school concert category' of the 2023 Jeunnesse Musicale International Young Audience Music Awards (www.yamawards.org).



The composers...



Johan Sebastian Bach

Johan Sebastian Bach is a famous German Baroque composer. He lived from 1685-1750, and during his lifetime he composed thousands of works. Besides being one of the best organists of his time, Bach had over 20 children, many of whom also became composers and musicians. Bach is considered one of the foremost composers ever to have lived, and his works are regarded so highly that three of his recordings are currently floating 24 billion kilometres away from Earth, in the outer solar system, on the cargo of the space probe Voyager 1, which launched in 1977.

Bach's Art of Fugue comprises of 14 fugues and 4 canons for four voices or instruments. Rumour has it that Bach died while writing his final fugue, leaving it unfinished. In this programme we present Bach's feisty contrapunctus 9, alla Duodecima. A fugue is built up on a theme which is presented first on each instrument, and then twisted and turned upside down, but recognisably reappearing in its original form throughout the piece.

Click here
to hear Woodpeckers
perform Contrapunctus
1 from the Art of Fugue

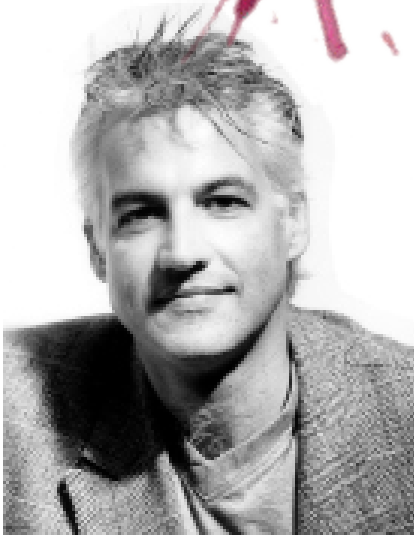


Antonio Vivaldi is another well-known composer from the Baroque period. He lived between 1678-1741 and spent most of his life in Venice, Italy, where he worked as a priest, composer and teacher at a school for orphaned girls. He became known as the 'Red Priest', most likely because of his fiery red hair and personality. Not only was he an excellent melody writer, but Vivaldi's music is filled with joy and excessive energy, many of his fast movements being ferociously difficult to play. Vivaldi wrote over 500 concertos for different instruments, and in this programme we present his C major concerto for recorder in a fun and interesting light.



Click here to listen to Woodpeckers play Vivaldi's C-major concerto





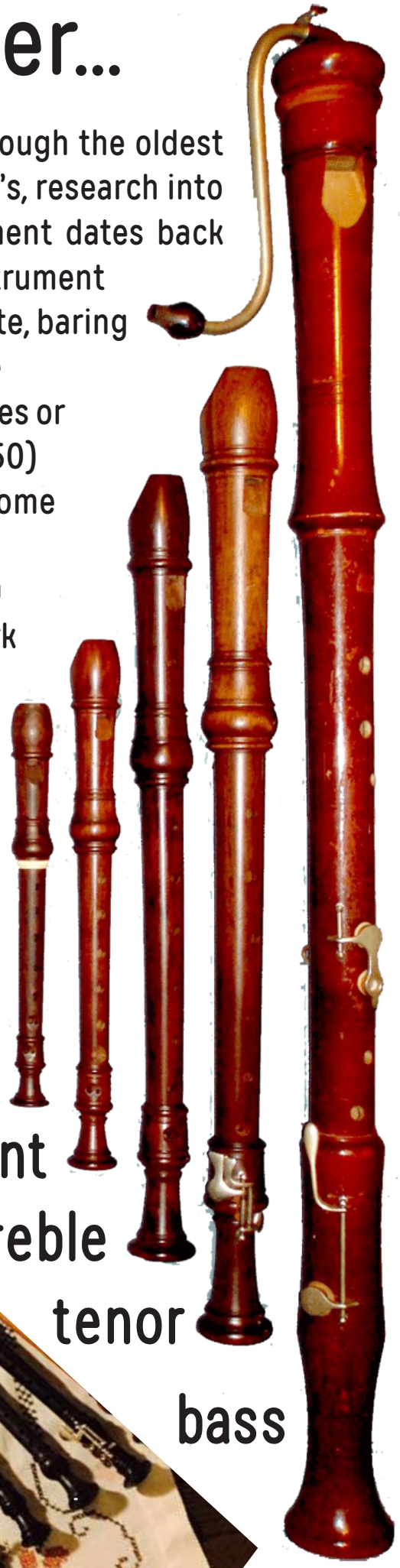
Chiel Meijering is a contemporary composer, born in Holland in 1954. He enjoys writing music for unusual combinations of instruments, and often gives his works wild titles. We will perform a short excerpt from his work for four recorders, entitled 'Sitting Ducks'. Within the context of this performance, the section is presented as a unification of our anger and conflict.

Listen to the complete work here:

About the recorder...

The recorder is an ancient instrument, and although the oldest surviving working model dates back to the 1300's, research into much older paintings reveals that the instrument dates back much further than this- the oldest surviving instrument in the World, a 60,000-year-old Neanderthal flute, baring much resemblance to that of the recorder. In the programme 'Bach and the Birds' we play on copies or instruments from the Baroque period (1600-1750) which are made of different types of wood and come in many different sizes, from the small, shrill sopranino, to the treble recorder, and all the way down to the big bass recorders, which have a dark and growling sound. Although the recorder fell out of fashion during the late 18th-century, the instrument has gained in popularity over the past hundred years, with many composers choosing it as their instrument of choice when composing new works.





sopranino

descant

treble

tenor

bass

Practical information...

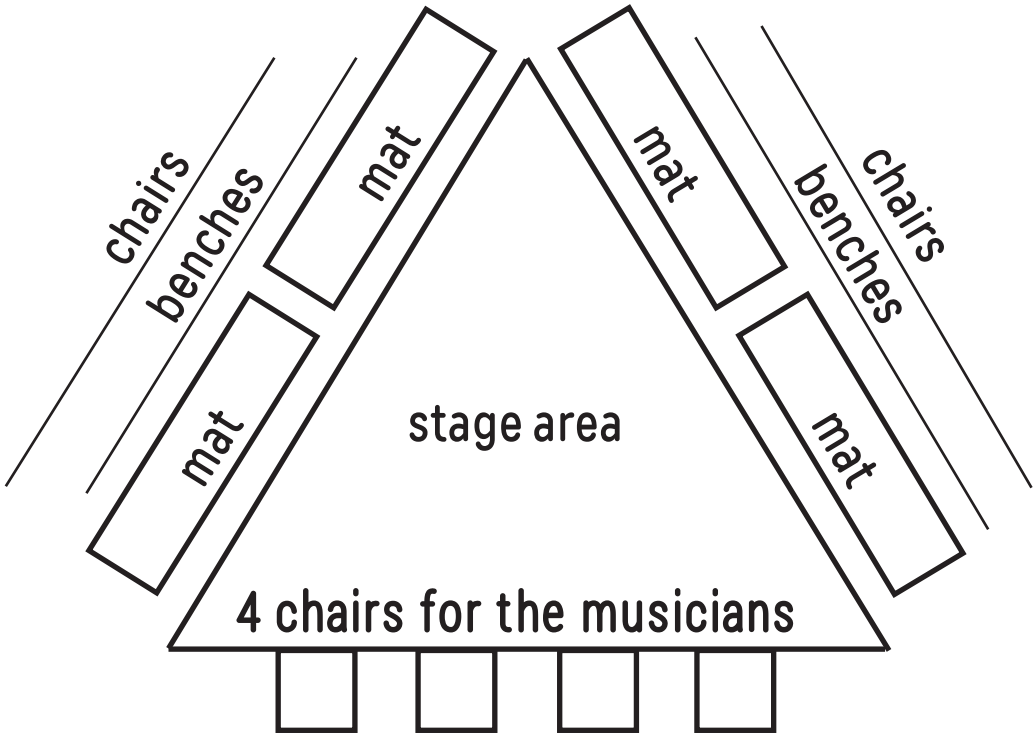
Target group: The programme can be tailored to all ages, from newborn babies, to toddlers and pre-schoolers, and to our main target group, 6-12 year-olds. We have a workshop concept for teenagers, older students and music students and the main programme can be presented as a family concert programme, equally geared towards adults and children.

Concert length: 35 minutes of music + time for questions and 'meet the instruments'. We are flexible with the concert length, and for smaller children we have a shorter programme, and also a longer version for festivals and family concerts.

Set-up time: Minimum 20 minutes before the concert start time. A room to change and warm up.

Location: Gym hall, concert hall, library or large classroom with a big enough area for the musicians and audience.

Stage area: Triangel shaped area 8 x 8 x 6 m (ideally on floor level). We suggest that the smallest audience sit on mats, followed by benches, and lastly chairs (see below)





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www.woodpeckersquartet.com