



Ensemble Fantasticus

Programmes 2026-27

Ensemble Fantasticus

Ensemble Fantasticus is an early music ensemble that has been active for over 15 years from its base in Amsterdam. At the heart of the ensemble are Japanese **violinist Rie Kimura** and English **viola da gamba player Robert Smith** – both prominent in the European Early Music Scene as soloists, ensemble players and members of world-renowned period instrument orchestras.

We have always found a special connection with music from the 17th and 18th Centuries. We love the way it “speaks” to us, and the endless sense of adventure we get from discovering forgotten music and understanding how it was originally performed.

For us the definition of a successful concert is when the public feels the music “speak” - through our historically set-up instruments. One of the biggest compliments we receive is when someone tells us, “I never knew that (e.g.) Couperin / Buxtehude / Bertali wrote such wonderful music!” When we hear that, we know that the music has spoken and it’s mission accomplished!

*We are fortunate to live in the Netherlands, surrounded by some of the most exciting musicians in the early music world – many of them friends and colleagues. All of our programmes feature ‘friends’, whether it’s a long-time partner such as **Pieter-Jan Belder** on the **harpichord** or special guests for a special programmes such as **Countertenor Alex Potter** or **Oboist Antoine Torunczyk**. We hope you enjoy reading about our current programmes on offer and look forward to seeing you in concert!*

Rie Kimura & Robert Smith





Information and Contact

For all enquiries please email us at [**info@fantasticus.art**](mailto:info@fantasticus.art)

We are always happy to discuss our programmes and discuss possibilities not included in this brochure.

We encourage you to listen to our recordings which can be found on all streaming services. An overview of our recordings can be found on our website: [**https://fantasticus.art/recordings/**](https://fantasticus.art/recordings/)

Our [**YouTube Channel**](#) has some great films - some taken from live concerts and some taken from recording sessions.



Buxtehude's Chamber Music

In 2025 we completed a large project to record all of **Dietrich Buxtehude's Chamber Music** together with harpsichordist **Pieter-Jan Belder**. The 3-CD Box was released on Brilliant Classics. The project was a celebration for us – Buxtehude has been a staple of our concert programmes over the last 15 years, and it was a dream come true to record his entire instrumental output.

When we play Buxtehude, we often find audiences are surprised at how **dramatic** the music is: they don't expect it to be so **energetic**, or so full of contrast; they don't expect the moments of pure joy and meditative **abstract beauty**; they don't expect to enjoy it so much! These are of course the reasons why we love to play Buxtehude. Nowadays, Buxtehude is best known because of his association with and influence on J.S. Bach. For us Buxtehude clearly stands as a monumental composer in his own right, and it never becomes tiring to perform his music, not even after 15 years of playing his sonatas!

Our Buxtehude concert programmes are flexible, with a variety of works and instrumentations that can be performed by between 3 and 6 musicians.

- **Repertoire:** Buxtehude Sonatas
- **Ensemble:** 3-6 musicians
- **Video:** [Buxtehude YouTube Playlist](#)
- **[Sample Programme Link](#)**

Travels with an Oboe: Pan-European trio-sonatas

with oboist Antoine Torunczyk

Both Rie and Robert, have been members of Ton Koopman's **Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra** for the last 15 years. On many occasions in "ABO" they have been astonished by the beautiful sounds coming from oboist **Antoine Torunczyk**, and more than once they have been reduced to tears by one single long note. More than enough reason to invite him for a chamber music concert!

Fantasticus and Antoine will perform some of the outstanding chamber music written for oboe and violin from across Europe during the Baroque: works by Händel, Telemann, C.P.E Bach, Henry Purcell and François Couperin. In this concert the violin and oboe are accompanied by a cello or viola da gamba and harpsichord.

Antoine Torunczyk is principal oboist with Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Concerto Copenhagen and much in demand as a chamber musician. He is Professor of Historical Oboe at the Schola Cantorum in Basel and at the Paris Conservatoire.



Antoine's playing is talkative, lyrical and dramatic.

- **Repertoire:** Trio-Sonatas for Violin and Oboe by Händel, Telemann, Purcell and F. Couperin.
- **Ensemble:** 4 musicians
- **Video:** [Antoine's Bach Solo with ABO](#)



"Alex Potter stands out with his soulful, ravishingly warm-toned countertenor."

Find out more about Alex on his [website](#).

Sacred Northern Italian vocal works

with countertenor **Alex Potter**

Fantasticus joins forces with acclaimed countertenor **Alex Potter**. This evocative concert features sacred **17th century motets and instrumental gems** by Rosenmüller, Strozzi, Merula, Legrenzi, and Stradella — Experience the passion, devotion, and virtuosity of Italian solo vocal music in its purest form.

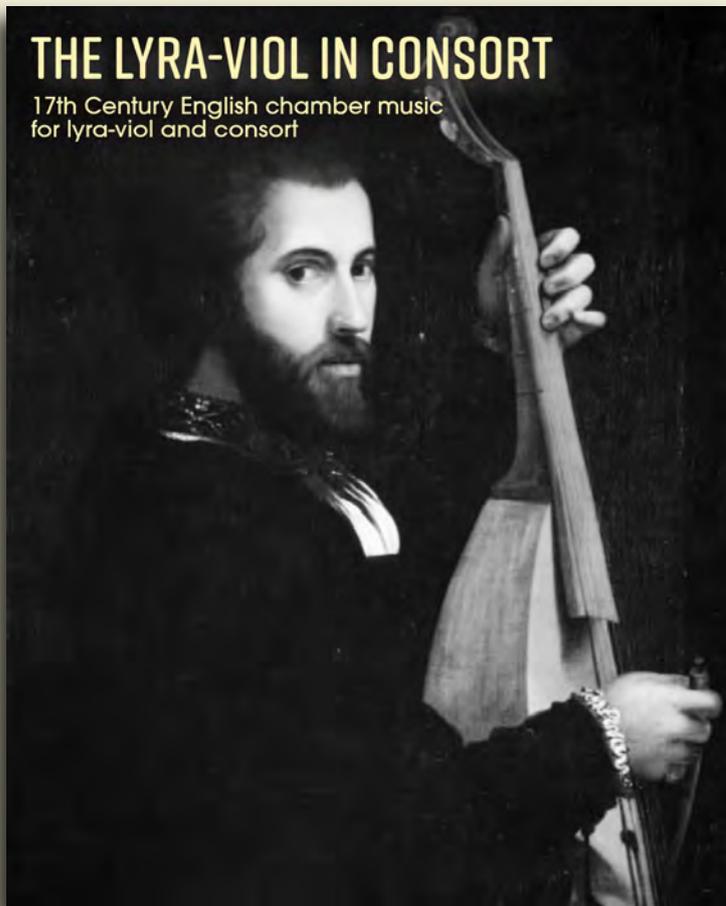
Alex's voice combines crystalline clarity with emotional depth, making him a masterful interpreter of 17th-century sacred music. Our shared intuitive understanding of the repertoire means it's an absolute pleasure to make music together with him.

The programme is brought to life by a rich ensemble of two violins, viola da gamba, and continuo.

- **Repertoire:** 17th Century Italian Motets and Sonatas by Strozzi, Merula, Legrenzi
- **Ensemble:** Alex Potter plus 4 musicians
- **Video:** Alex singing Vivaldi's Cum Dederit
- **Sample Programme Link**

THE LYRA-VIOL IN CONSORT

17th Century English chamber music
for lyra-viol and consort



The Lyra-Viol: an instrument, a way of playing

The lyra-viol is a chordal way of playing the viola da gamba that, despite its popularity in 17th Century England, is largely forgotten today. The features that make it a fascinating instrument have also contributed to its oblivion: **the 6 strings of the viol may be tuned in many ways (scordatura)** – perfect for an evening’s entertainment at home, but challenging for today’s concert life.

All through the 17th Century, England’s most outstanding musicians wrote music for the lyra-viol – **John Jenkins, Tobias Hume, Christopher Simpson, Alfonso Ferrabosco II**. This concert features remarkable works written by these composers for the lyra-viol in combination with **a mixed consort of lute (or harp), violin, harpsichord and “normal” bass-viol**. Next to the dance music of the time, we also present **programmatic pieces** on the subjects of echos, bells, mourners, lamentations and ballads.

- **Repertoire:** Tobias Hume, John Jenkins, Christopher Simpson
- **Ensemble:** 5 musicians
- **Video:** [Jenkins "5 Bell Consort"](#)
- **Sample Programme Link**



Lamentations & Meditations

In our most intimate programme we play introspective music for violin and viola da gamba.

J.S Bach's abstract canons from his **Art of Fugue** let us consider the origin of human genius while *lamentos* from **Tobias Hume** and **Heinrich Biber** explore 17th century concepts of melancholy. This programme also features a new composition, *Tombeau pour Monsieur Rihm*, written for Robert by Dutch composer **Matijs de Roo** as a dedication in memory of the influential German composer, Wolfgang Rihm.

Completing the programme are English divisions on a ground, and 16th Century divisions on Cipriano di Rore's heart-rending madrigal, *Ancor che col partire*.

- **Repertoire:** J.S. Bach, H. Biber, Tobias Hume, John Jenkins, M. de Roo
- **Ensemble:** 2 musicians
- **Video:** [Biber Passaglia](#), [Hume Lamentations](#)
- **[Sample Programme Link](#)**