

Barokksolistene



“The whole joyous evening was a liberation, carrying us back to a time when the words “classical” and “folk” hadn’t yet been invented, and music was simply music” The Telegraph

Founded and led by Norwegian violinist Bjarte Eike, Barokksolistene is recognised as one of the world’s most dynamic and exciting early music groups, fusing virtuoso musicianship with flawless ensemble playing. Constantly striving to reach out to new audiences, their passion for engaging with folk and experimental music, improvisation, visual arts, dance and storytelling has led them to create unique concert experiences which play to sold-out audiences worldwide.

Nowhere is this more evident than in their signature project, The Alehouse Sessions. Curated and devised by Bjarte Eike, this is an ever-changing look into the music of the English 17th-century tavern, with the group diverting away from the traditional concert model to create an evening that is “innately theatrical, genre bending and suffused with great musicianship” (The Strad). An album was released on Rubicon Classics and immediately made the UK top 10 classical charts. Since then, Barokksolistene has toured The Alehouse Sessions throughout Europe and the US and it continues to return season after season, each time with new ideas. A favourite at major European festivals, The Alehouse Sessions has found a home in spaces as diverse as barns and rock clubs, candlelit theatres and major concert halls including the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and Royal Albert Hall. A film of The Alehouse Sessions was broadcast on BBC Four.

The project has also given rise to several new productions, including The Nordic Sessions, focusing on Scandinavian traditions, and Microbrew, featuring folk dancers from the Norwegian group Mamelukk; the latter was performed at the BBC Proms.

Barokksolistene’s album The Image of Melancholy, one of the group’s first major recordings, was released on BIS and

explores the use of melancholy in music throughout the centuries. It went on to win International Recording of the Year at the Danish Prisen Awards. Their most recent album, The Playhouse Sessions, was released by Rubicon Classics and was enthusiastically received, with critics praising the exhilarating and stylish performances.

On stage, their collaborations have seen them work with artists as diverse as choreographer Liam Scarlett on his ballet Vespertine and Norwegian jazz musician Jon Balke, whose Siwan project explores the links between North African Arabic, Andalusian and baroque music and has resulted in three acclaimed albums on ECM.

Further projects have included performances of Malcolm Bruno’s reconstruction of Bach’s St Mark Passion and a series of major opera productions, including a staged Messiah with Netia Jones at the Bergen International Festival and Handel’s Alcina for Den Norske Opera, Oslo. They have taken their approach to integration further by appearing on stage both as musicians and actors in productions of Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas at Den Ny Opera Esbjerg and at Longborough Festival Opera, where the production was met with great critical acclaim.

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