

# BAROKKSOLISTENE THE ALEHOUSE SESSIONS

Directed by Bjarte Eike

## **Barokksolistene Biography**

Founded and led by Norwegian violinist Bjarte Eike in 2005, Barokksolistene is now recognized as one of the world's most dynamic and exciting groups working in the field of historically informed performance, fusing virtuoso musicianship with flawless ensemble playing. Constantly striving to reach out to new audiences, their passion to engage with folk and experimental music, improvisation, visual arts, dance and story-telling 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 project is an ever-changing and evolving 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 of the project was released on Rubicon Classics in 2017 and immediately made the UK top 10 classical charts. Since then Barokksolistene has toured the project throughout the UK, Germany, Scandinavia, the US and Ireland, and it continues to return season-after-season, each time with new ideas. In 2018 the album received the Opusklassik Award in Germany.

"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. In the same month that the album was released it featured as Recording of the Week on Danish Radio, going on to win the "International Recording of the Year" at the Danish P2 Prisen Award.

On stage their collaborations have found them working 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. Further concerts have included performances of the Malcom Bruno reconstruction of Bach's *St Markus 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 in Oslo, where they return in 2019 for a new production of *Dido and Aeneas*. Directed from the violin by Bjarte Eike the group will appear on stage as both actors and musicians.

Bjarte Eike and Barokksolistene are based in Norway and were established in 2005. They are very grateful to receive support from the government via Kulturrådet and the community of Norway as proud ambassadors of Norwegian culture.

## **Bjarte Eike Biography**

Baroque violinist Bjarte Eike pushes boundaries in classical music, constantly looking for new projects in the borderland of genres and is reaching out to new audiences with his infectious playing and style.

As the artistic director of Barokksolistene, he has created new and innovative concepts such as "The Alehouse Sessions"; exploring 17th century music from the pubs and alehouses in England, "The Early Joke"; a musical travel through music history, exploring different aspects on humour and music and "The Image of Melancholy"; dealing with the sad songs and emotions through renaissance, folk and experimental music.

As a freelance violinist he explores alternative ways of approaching classical music. Although rooted in Historically Informed Performance practice he strives to include other artistic aspects in his performances, using visual arts, dance, storytelling and improvisation. Major collaborations include Handel's Alcina at the Norwegian National Opera, Vespertine with choreographer Liam Scarlett, a staged Messiah with Netia Jones at the Bergen International Festival and recordings and concerts with jazz pianist Jon Balke, including as part of the Siwan project which explores the links between North African Arabic, Andalusian and baroque music.

This broad, unifying approach to music, as well as a desire to curate exhilarating new experiences for audiences has led to him being invited to be Artist-in-Residence at festivals for early music, classical music, folk music, experimental music and jazz and as a conductor he is increasingly in demand for play-direct engagements with major symphony orchestras.

Eike received his training from the Grieg Academy in Bergen, Norway and with Richard Gwilt in London, and has been Artist in residence at festivals for early music, classical music, folk music, experimental music and jazz. He has participated in a large number of recordings and is currently teaching baroque violin at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo and as a guest-teacher at the Royal Danish Music Conservatory in Copenhagen.



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