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### Program Notes. A Little Bizarre...A Little Extravagant. Camerata Milwaukee, Shorewood, WI. February 23, 2019.

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for providing us with a wonderful venue  
for tonight's concert



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# Camerata Milwaukee



*A little bizarre...  
a little extravagant...*

*Farina - Telemann - Vivaldi*

23 Feb 2019

# Program

## *Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)*

- \* Concerto for Strings and BC in B flat Major, RV 167  
Allegro - Andante - Allegro
- \* Concerto for Strings and BC in C minor, RV 118  
Allegro - Largo - Allegro

## *Carlo Farina (1600 - 1639)*

- \* *Capriccio Stravagante*  
Entrata — La Lira — Il Pifferino — Lira Variata — Legno — La Trombetta  
Le Gnacchere — La Gallina, Il Gallo — Il Flautino — Il Tremulo  
Fiferino della Soldatesca — Il Gatto — Il Cane — La Chitarra Spagnuola

~~ *Short Intermission* ~~

## *Georg Philipp Telemann (1681 - 1767)*

- \* Intrada-suite for 2 Violins "*Gulliver's Travels*", TWV 40:108  
Intrada — Lilliputsche Chaconne  
Brobdingnagische Guigue — Reverie der Laputier  
Loure der Gesitteten Houyhnhnms / Furie der Unartigen Yahoos
- \* Overture-Suite in G Major "*La Bizarre*", TWV 55:G2  
Overture — Courante — Branle — Sarabande — Fantasie  
Menuet I — Menuet II — Rossignol

# Program Notes

Born in the grand Republic of Venice, Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) enjoyed a successful career composing a plethora of operas, concertos, and sonatas. The two works on tonight's program are representative of the distinctly Baroque genre of concertos for entire ensembles. These date from the early 1720s, and thus may be thought of as close relatives of the sinfonias that thirty years later grew into full symphonies in the hands of Johann Stamitz and Josef Haydn.

A native of Mantua, violin virtuoso Carlos Farina (c. 1600–1639) worked for a time in Dresden—the seat of the powerful Elector of Saxony—where he was a colleague of Heinrich Schütz. During his time in Dresden, Farina published five books of sonatas, the second of which includes the fantastical *Capriccio Stravagante*. This remarkable sonata contrasts sections of dance music with imitative episodes, and is the first recorded instance of special techniques like pizzicato, sul ponticello (on the bridge for a flute-like sound), or col legno (using the wood rather than the hair of the bow).

See how many of the imitative sounds you can identify: Hurdy-gurdy, Shawnn (capped double-reed with a characteristic buzzing, nasal tone), Fife, Drums, Trumpet, Hen and Rooster, Flute, Organ, Cat, Dog, Spanish Guitar.

Originally studying to be a lawyer before switching to music, Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767) was one of the most prolific Germanic composers of his generation. His catalog of works includes operas, oratorios, cantatas, orchestral works, sonatas, and concertos for a broad range of instruments. A friend of both J.S.Bach and George Frideric Handel, Telemann possessed a broad imagination and a keen sense of wit.

Telemann seems to have enjoyed the popular literature of his day, as evidenced by compositions exploring the stories of Don Quixote and Gulliver's Travels. The latter work, scored for two solo violins, is based on Jonathan Swift's 1726 novel *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships*. The novel is a satire of travel accounts of the day, and of British and French politics. Telemann provides a soundtrack for several of the countries Gulliver visits, all with a humorous touch. This suite of dances begins normally enough, with a lively introduction. Then things get weird. A chaconne—typically a slow, serious piece composed over a repeating bass line—is written for the tiny Lilliputian people in the tiniest notes possible (64ths), with the time marked 3/32, and only lasts a diminutive, single page. The giant Brobdingnagians from Gulliver's second voyage, on the other hand, receive a long, lumbering jig written in whole notes and marked in the absurd time signature of 24/1 instead of the dance's usual sprightly 6/8. On Gulliver's third voyage, he meets the absent-minded and impractical philosophers, astronomers, and mathematicians of the flying island of Laputa, who must be whacked out of their reveries by servants carrying bags filled with peas. Likewise, Telemann gives the suite's fourth movement the impractical time signature of 2/2 while filling out the notation in much smaller subdivisions to generate an aural description of the Laputians' dozing and being awakened, as well as forcing the performer to do Laputian calculations to correctly execute the movement. (The soporific effect is similar to that found in the Largo of Vivaldi's "Spring" violin concerto). The suite ends with a dignified, pastoral loure for the honest and rational equine race of Houyhnhnms in the first violin part paired with a frenzied and wild dance for their stupid, brutish humanoid servants, the Yahoos, in the second violin part.

Like the fictional Gulliver, Telemann had an interest in other lands, especially the music of the Italian violin virtuosos and the French overture style for orchestra. The overture to the orchestral suite "*La Bizarre*" is done à la française, with elongated dotted-note patterns in the manner of Lulli or Rameau, but earns the work's nickname with a more Germanic fugal central section, which is an odd feature for an overture. Aside from the final movement—the song of the nightingale—the remaining movements of the suite are characteristically French dances such as the minuet and bourrée.

*Marianne Kordas graduated with master's degrees in music history and library science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She currently serves as the Director of the Music Materials Center for the James White Library at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, MI. Her passions include gardening, hiking, and early music.*