



Ensemble Hesper

PROMOTERS PACK 2026/2027



"I was hugely impressed by the virtuosity and musicality of these accomplished young musicians, and their boundless energy, their well-researched programmes, and their relaxed rapport with their audiences make me sure that they will become an established and admired ensemble in the very near future - another great 'find' by the St Magnus Festival!"

D James Ross, Early Music Review

About Us

Ensemble Hesperī is a dynamic and innovative London-based period ensemble, with a passion for showcasing Early Music through intelligent, distinctive programming. The members of Ensemble Hesperī, **Mary-Jannet Leith (Recorders)**, **Magdalena Loth-Hill (Baroque Violin)**, **Florence Petit (Baroque Cello)** and **Thomas Allery (Harpsichord)**, met during their studies at the Royal College of Music in London, and the varied talents of each member of the Hesperī constellation combine to produce an infectious energy, leading to joyful collaborations with singers, dancers, and actors. Whether performing as the core ensemble, or with friends for larger projects, Hesperī's performances embody the spontaneity of true chamber music.

Since 2019, the ensemble has gained a strong reputation for championing rarely-heard music, bringing forgotten stories to life through original historical research. Funded by a **Lottery grant from Arts Council England**, its debut project, "The Pheasant's Eye", celebrated Scottish eighteenth-century music, featuring special choreography from Highland dancer Kathleen Gilbert. In 2021, the ensemble embarked upon a new project, **supported by the Continuo Foundation**, "From Caledonia to the Capital", which told the stories of Scottish composers who settled in eighteenth-century London. In early 2022, the ensemble received a second grant from the Continuo Foundation for its project, "Then I play'd upon the Harpsichord", an immersive concert exploring the musical tastes and talents of Queen Charlotte, consort to George III.

In 2020, Hesperī was selected as **Britten Pears Young Artists** on the Chamber Music Residence scheme, and in November 2020, won first prize at the **London International Festival of Early Music Young Ensemble Competition**. In September 2021, the ensemble was delighted to win third prize at the prestigious **International Van Wassenaer Competition** in Utrecht, and released its debut album with EM Records, "Full of the Highland Humours", later that year. In December, the ensemble was selected as **City Music Foundation artists 2021**. In late 2023, Hesperī launched its vocal ensemble, the "Hesperī Voices", in a performance of Purcell and Blow, supported again by a grant from the Continuo Foundation. In 2024, the ensemble released a critically acclaimed album with **BIS Records**, "A Gift for your Garden", featured as record of the week on BBC Radio 3's **Essential Classics**.

Hesperī has appeared regularly on BBC Radio 3's **Early Music Show** and **In Tune**, recorded in studio for **Classic FM**, and has performed at leading festivals and venues across the United Kingdom and Europe, including St Magnus International Festival, Buxton International Festival, Kings Place, St Martin-in-the Fields, Barber Institute, National Centre for Early Music, York, Brighton Early Music Festival, LIFEM, Petworth Festival, Lichfield Festival, King's Lynn Festival, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Snape Maltings, Festival Alte Musik Knechtsteden, and Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht Fringe.

www.ensemblehesperi.com

Concert Programmes for 2026/2027

A Gift for your Garden

The Baroque composer Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767), one of the most prolific composers of all time, created a much-envied garden at his Hamburg residence later in life. In 1742, he wrote to his friend Uffenbach on the subject of his new love of flowers: “I am insatiable where hyacinths and tulips are concerned, greedy for ranunculi, and especially for anemones.” Telemann was part of a lively network of plant exchange across Germany and beyond, and he often begged his long-suffering musical friends and correspondents to send rare specimens for his growing collection.

In London, the Scottish composer James Oswald was also no stranger to the mid-eighteenth-century craze for plants. In 1755, he published two collections of “Airs for the Seasons”, likely inspired by the gardens of his patron, Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales, and his wife, Princess Augusta. Her impressive collection of exotic plants at Kew Palace formed the founding collection of today’s world-famous Kew Gardens.

Our programme presents a cornucopia of music by **Telemann** and his horticultural correspondents: a sonata from his astonishing Paris Quartets; a folky trio sonata and two virtuosic solo fantasias, alongside trio sonatas by **Handel** and a rarely heard galant work by **Johann Gottlieb Graun** - all framed by charming airs by **Oswald** depicting Telemann’s floral favourites.

This programme was released in late 2024 on the internationally renowned label BIS Records, featuring on BBC Radio 3 Essential Classics, and receiving an excellent review from Gramophone.





Handel in the Strand

This programme brings the spirit of eighteenth-century musical London to life. In the early 1700s, London was quickly becoming the most important musical hub of Europe, attracting the great Handel himself, as well as a multitude of European musicians who seized the opportunity to earn their living in London's thriving theatre district.

The eighteenth-century Strand was a vibrant and colourful thoroughfare, home to many of London's music shops, print houses, and instrument makers. Opposite Somerset House, notorious printer John Walsh first published **Handel's** trio sonatas and **Corelli's** ever-popular Op. 5 violin sonatas. Only streets away, Scottish musicians like **James Oswald** and **Robert Bremner** set up their own successful music shops on the Strand, feeding the craze for Scottish music in the capital.

Like today, the Strand was moments away from London's theatre district. On the stage, we find star recorder player **James Paisible** performing virtuoso compositions between acts. At the Theatre Royal, Handel employed the best singers and instrumentalists of the day, including star soprano and keyboard composer **Elisabetta de Gambarini**, and the unrivalled oboe player and composer **Giuseppe Sammartini**.

Finally, this programme showcases trio sonatas by two leading contemporaries of Handel, sadly overshadowed today: the harmonically adventurous **Michael Festing**, and Master of the King's Music **William Boyce**, whose lyrical style and unique voice encapsulates the English Baroque.

Educational Workshops

At Ensemble Hesperii, we believe that live classical music should be accessible to all, and we always seek to communicate the music we love to new audiences through a welcoming and energetic stage presence. Our instruments provide a great way to delve into the sounds and history of the musical past.

Our members are experienced workshop leaders and teachers, and have worked with Live Music Now, delivering workshops in care homes, SEND schools and community centres. In 2023, we were invited to deliver a week-long course for the Aldeburgh Young Musicians Programme, introducing Early Music to talented students age 10-18.

We can design **bespoke workshop and playing sessions** for different age-groups, abilities and group sizes; please ask us for more information.

Lecture Recitals

Our recorder player Mary-Jannet Leith is an experienced researcher, specialising in eighteenth-century British musical culture. She is able to deliver fascinating **lecture-recitals or pre-concert talks** related to our programme, or to your festival theme.

Please contact us to discuss your ideas for workshops and talks; we are more than happy to work with you to develop new opportunities for your audiences.



"Hesperi's ensemble playing is immaculate, their instruments blending seamlessly together...This was a delightful concert; there was a feeling of enormous enjoyment from the players coupled with tightly disciplined playing, all based on serious scholarship."

Andrew Petch, Shropshire Music Festival



Booking Ensemble Hesperis

Please feel free to contact us by e-mail or phone to discuss further details of our performances, programmes, and workshops. In addition to our two programmes for 2026/2027, we are always happy to work with you to create tailored programmes to suit existing themes of festivals or concert series. We also work regularly with additional instrumental colleagues and our vocal group, the Hesperis voices, for larger projects, directed from the harpsichord.

Harpsichord Provision

For performances within the UK mainland, we can provide our own excellent harpsichord, a copy of a 1667 anonymous French instrument, built by leading British harpsichord maker Alan Gotto (2016). The harpsichord incurs no additional transportation costs.

Fees

Our performance fees include harpsichord provision and tuning, but exclude travel and accommodation costs. Fees vary on the type of concert, location, and length of programme, so please do contact us directly for a tailored quote. As a rough guide, our fees for the upcoming 2025/2026 season are:

Lunchtime Concert (1 hour): £1,400

Evening Concert: (2x 45 minute halves): £1,800

Workshops/Lecture Recitals: By negotiation

Contact

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