

# The Harvard Crimson

## Bachsoc Embraces Baroque

By Jiye Ha, CONTRIBUTING WRITER • April 17, 2013

This Saturday, the Bach Society Orchestra will have its fourth performance of the school year. The concert will feature three pieces: Salieri's "La Tempesta di Mare," Bach's Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major, and Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" with violin soloist Keir D. GoGwilt '13.

Time is one of the concert's overarching themes. "We are doing this concert in conjunction with Harvard museums, which now have exhibitions on time, how it is measured and perceived," says Lucien D. Werner '13, the musical director of the Bach Society Orchestra. The concert is, in fact, sponsored by the Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments, which is currently putting on an exhibit entitled "Time and Time Again." "Four Seasons' is really a piece that can be thought of as a passage of time, and so the linkage seemed appropriate."

Baroque music's special relationship with time is also reflected in the pieces chosen for the concert. "In musical experience, time is reorganized in terms of musical phrases," GoGwilt says. "[In Baroque music] you get long, arching lines, and it's almost a different sense of time...compared to Romantic music or in contemporary music." In order to experiment with the properties of baroque music, the Bach Society Orchestra was coached by a baroque violinist. In one rehearsal, the members practiced holding their bows at the balance point rather than at the end to approximate the feeling of the baroque bow, which was much shorter than the modern bow.

The concert will be conducted in the flexible style of a chamber ensemble, in which the conductor, solo violinist, and the other players all become leaders. "The conductor's role didn't really become necessary or common until the Romantic era, where the orchestras got really large," Werner says. He will be conducting "The Four Seasons," during which he will simultaneously play a part on the harpsichord and give cues when appropriate.

"If we are sacrificing the more rigid synchronization of everybody playing together at the same time, instead what we are doing is feeling the freedom and nuance," GoGwilt says.

Even though the pieces are by no means unusual, Bach Society Orchestra is still excited to explore these works. "Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons' is a very popular piece—everybody knows it—but it doesn't get played that often. So I thought it was time to do a well-known, fun piece that will perhaps have a new take," Werner says.