

Bellot Ensemble I

Lucine Musaelian soprano, viola da gamba
Edmund Taylor violin
Nathan Giorgetti viola da gamba
Daniel Murphy theorbo, Baroque guitar
Matthew Brown harpsichord, chamber organ

Whose Wills Were Laws

William Lawes (1602–1645)
 Fantasia-Suite No.8 in D 10'

William Webb (c.1600–1659)
 'Powerful Morpheus' 4'

Christopher Simpson (c.1602–1669)
 Divisions for two bass viols 3'

William Lawes
 'I'm sick of love', from *Ayres and Dialogues*, Book 3 3'

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)
 Sonata in G minor, Z.780 8'

Henry Lawes (1596–1662)
 'Have you e'er seen the morning sun'
 From *Selected Ayres and Dialogues*, Book 3 2'

John Jenkins (1592–1678)
 Fantasia Suite in D minor 9'

William Lawes
 'Whilst I this standing lake' 3'

Christopher Simpson (c.1602–1669)
 The Seasons: Winter 13'

Nicholas Lanier (1588–1666)
 'No more shall meads be deck'd with flowers' 3'

Bellot Ensemble is a Britten Pears Young Artist for 2025/26, here for a two-week residency on the Chamber Music in Residence course.

Bellot Ensemble is a vibrant period-instrument group celebrated for energetic performances and a distinctive approach to 17th-century repertoire. Rooted in historical performance practice, the ensemble blends detailed research with spontaneity, particularly through expressive interpretation of early sources, and often brings together instrumental and vocal forces, with regular collaborations involving consorts, choirs and opera companies.

In October 2025, the ensemble began a two-year term as the New Generation Baroque Ensemble, a development scheme from BBC Radio 3, the RCM, and the National Centre for Early Music. In 2023/24 they were part of the Brighton Early Music Festival Live Scheme. In 2024 they toured John Frederick Lampe's *The Dragon of Wantley* with New Sussex Opera and were featured artists at the Overstrand Early Music Festival.

Upcoming highlights include performances at the Oxford Festival of the Arts, new appearances through the NGBE scheme, and a residency in 2026 with Les Arts Florissants' Odyssée programme. The Bellot Ensemble is supported by the Keith Coventry Bursary.

Whose Wills Were Laws

The title of today's programme comes from a contemporary epitaph for William Lawes, killed in 1645 while serving the Royalist cause during the English Civil War. The phrase has since become a shorthand for the authority and individuality of his musical voice, and it provides a fitting lens through which to view English music across the middle decades of the 17th century. Despite the political and social disruption of the period, musical life in England shows striking continuity, sustained by shared practices, close-knit communities of players, and a strong culture of domestic music making.

Lawes stands at the centre of this world. His Fantasia Suite No.8 in D reflects the expectations placed on highly skilled performers working within aristocratic households and at court. English consort music of this period depends on dialogue between equal voices, with musical interest distributed across the ensemble rather than focused on a single line. This conversational quality underpins much of the programme and links Lawes to contemporaries such as John Jenkins, whose Fantasia Suite in D minor represents a tradition that continued to flourish well beyond the court. Jenkins's music was widely copied and played, valued for its balance, clarity and adaptability to different contexts.

Song and instrumental music are closely intertwined throughout the programme. William Webb's 'Powerful Morpheus' belongs to a repertory associated with masques and private performance, where poetry, gesture and sound were shaped for intimate spaces. The expressive priorities of English song are further developed in works by both William and Henry Lawes, whose ayres place a premium on clarity of text and rhetorical pacing. 'I'm sick of love' and 'Have you e'er seen the morning sun' exemplify a style in which emotional directness is achieved through restraint, with the singer supported by an accompaniment that responds closely to the words.

Christopher Simpson offers a different but complementary perspective on English musical culture. Known as a theorist and teacher, he was also a practical musician, and his *Divisions* for two bass viols in F reflect the skills players were expected to acquire through disciplined study and experimentation. His *Seasons*, represented here by 'Winter', similarly combine instruction with expressive intent, demonstrating how musical learning and performance were deeply connected.

The programme also looks beyond the Civil War into the Restoration. Purcell's Sonata in G minor, Z.780, from the *Sonatas of Three Parts*, shows English chamber music engaging more directly with continental forms while retaining its characteristic sense of balance and expressive control. The programme closes by returning to the earlier courtly world with Nicholas Lanier's 'No more shall meads be deck'd with flowers', a song that captures the expressive ideals of the early Stuart court and the artistic environment in which so much of this music was first cultivated.

Taken together, these works trace a living tradition shaped by shared spaces, personal connections, and a continuous exchange between song, consort, and pedagogy. Rather than presenting a single stylistic narrative, the programme offers a portrait of English music as it was practised, taught, and sustained across a period of profound change.

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William Webb: Powerful Morpheus

Text: William Webb

Powerful Morpheus, let thy charms
Wrap the world in slumber's arms,
And Music's soft delicious strains,
Thou that both heart and care doth change
With the sweet composed numbers,
Rock each mortal into slumbers.

So no ear nor eye shall know
Where we are or what we do.
Watching Circe play and sing,
Touch your sweet enchanting string,
That Phoebus may in Thetis' lap
Outsleep himself but one hour's nap;
Let his bright all-seeing fires
Rouse us from our wish'd desires.

Lovers in their stol'n delight
Wish it were perpetual night.

Song texts continue on the next page.

William Lawes: I'm sick of love

Text: Robert Herrick (1591–1674)

I'm sick of love: O let me lie
Under your shades to sleep or die!
Either is welcome, so here I have
Or here my bed, or here my grave.

Why do ye sigh, and sob, and keep
Time with the tears that I do weep?
Can ye have sense, or do ye prove
What crucifixions are in love?

I know ye do, and that's the why
Ye weep, being sick of love as I.

Henry Lawes: Have you e'er seen the morning sun

Have you e'er seen the morning sun
Rise from the earth, and paint the sky,
And shed his beams on fields undone,
While mists before his presence fly?

So did my love once rise to me,
So did her beams my soul inspire;
But now she's set, and leaves me be
To freeze in sorrow and desire.

The spring is past, the summer's gone,
My joys are wither'd all and dead;
And I, like some forsaken one,
Lament the pleasures that I had.

William Lawes: Whilst I this standing lake

Whilst I this standing lake,
Swathed up with yew and cypress boughs,
Do move by sighs and vows,
Let sadness only wake;
That whilst thick darkness stains the light,
My thoughts may cast another night,
In which double shade,
By heaven, and me made,
Oh, let me weep,
And fall asleep,
And forgotten fade.

Hark! from yonder hollow tree
Sadly do sing two auch' ret owls,
Whilst the hermit wolf howls,
All warning me to die;
Whilst from the graves
My wronged love craves
My sad company.

Cease, Hylas, cease the call,
Such, oh such was thy parting groan,
Breathed out to me alone
When thou disdain'd didst fall.
Lo, thus unto thy silent tomb,
In my sad winding sheet I come,
Creeping o'er dead bones
And marble stones,
That I may mourn
Over thy urn,
And appease thy groans.

Nicholas Lanier: No more shall meads be deck'd with flowers

Text: Thomas Carew (1595–1640)

No more shall meads be deck'd with flow'rs,
Nor sweetness live in rosy bow'rs,
Nor greenest buds on branches spring,
Nor warbling birds delight to sing,
Nor April violets paint the grove,
When first I leave my Celia's love.

The fish shall in the ocean burn,
And fountains sweet shall bitter turn;
The humble vale no floods shall know,
When floods shall highest hills o'erflow;
Black Lethe shall oblivion leave,
Before my Celia I deceive.

Love shall his bow and shafts lay by,
And Venus' doves want wings to fly;
The sun refuse to show his light,
And day shall then be turned to night;
And in that night no star appear,
When e'er I leave my Celia dear.

Love shall no more inhabit Earth,
Nor lovers more shall love for worth;
Nor joy above in Heaven dwell,
Nor pain torment poor souls in hell:
Grim Death no more shall horrid prove,
When e'er I leave bright Celia's love.