



Programme Sheets 2026-2027-2028



Credit: Matt Brodie



In an age of AI, I Fagiolini is a hand-painted original. Its first concert in 1986 included Monteverdi, Grieg and the Fairy Liquid jingle. Monteverdi has remained a constant and I Fagiolini has gone on to rethink exactly what a vocal group does, from unstageable a cappella to cross-cultural projects, world premiere recordings, the podcast Choral Chihuahua – and plenty of film. Join this most characterful of ensembles for the best music they've sung across its 40 years with this anniversary programme.

PROGRAMME TO INCLUDE

Renaissance masterworks from England & Spain
Two comic miniatures (Germany & Italy)
Claudio Monteverdi - Greatest Madrigals
Joanna Marsh - Batter My Heart *or* Geocentric
Howard Skempton - Two pewits
Daniel-Lesur - Le jardin clos & La voix du bien-aimé
Adrian Williams - Sweetest Love
Herbert Howells - The Summer is Coming
Bheka Dlamini - Woah Lashona

8 singers + RH



Monteverdi

1610 VESPERS



I FAGIOLINI
ROBERT HOLLINGWORTH

I Fagiolini's iconic new recording, to be released in September 2026, strips back this great work to reveal new elements of its sonic glory. Raw Italian power, utterly intimate miniatures, filigree ornamentation and astounding emotional depth. Arts Desk called the London performance *“off-the-charts brilliant... utterly enthralling.”*

I Fagiolini offers an intimate yet powerful performance of Monteverdi's defining masterwork accompanied by wind, string and brass (with the English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble). The piece works best as Monteverdi originally envisaged: a consort of dramatic solo singers instead of a larger choir.

Robert Hollingworth observes: *“Over different projects from The Full Monteverdi to our five albums of his music, I've watched these singers become world-class exponents of Monteverdi's fearsome coloratura - but also at channelling the raw emotion in his music.”*

“A tremendously punchy, passionate and provocative performance of his 1610 Vespers...sonically enriched with whirling ornamentation... there was much to beguile in the beautifully nuanced individual solos.”

- Richard Morrison in The Times



1610 Montage

11 singers
RH
6 ECSE
11 instrumentalists





Dido and Aeneas

I Fagiolini's staged take on Purcell's masterpiece – written when he was just 29. So much variety in a single hour: great tunes, sparkling instrumental interludes, hysterical witches, dance music and of course the great lament, 'When I am laid in earth'. Purcell's varied genius is also celebrated in I Fagiolini's amuse-bouche, perfect miniatures from the composer dubbed 'Britain's Orpheus'.

"This restaging of a classic tale captured a true rollercoaster of emotions and captivated newcomers and expert audiences alike."

A Youngish Perspective

Programme

Dido and Aeneas

The sparrow and the gentle dove

(From hardy climes)

Mark how readily

(Raise, raise the voice)

Pavan in 4 parts / Hornpipe

(King Arthur)

"It had, as well as the expected tragedy, moments of humour that are the trademark of the group's founder and leader, Robert Hollingworth."

The Arts Desk

8 singers, 6 instrumentalists
RH on organ

"Aeneas was sung by Frederick Long, heroic of voice and commanding in stature, displaying in the rich deeper reaches of his baritone register all the presentiments of disaster which are about to unfold."

Opera Today

Credit: Sally Anderson

L'Orfeo

Monteverdi's **L'Orfeo** is often called the greatest opera pre-Handel, but plenty of modern directors believe it to be the greatest opera of all time. What better subject for a fledgling artform than the tragedy of Orpheus: the semi-divine musician, whose melodies charmed birds and beasts and could even (or so the poets say) soothe the torments of hell itself? Its timeless love story is told over aching harmony and exotic orchestral colour of cornetts, sackbuts, early strings, harp and theorbos.

Opera barely existed when Claudio Monteverdi composed L'Orfeo in 1607, and you can still sense the excitement, the freshness and the raw inspiration of an artform that was inventing itself on the hoof. It's perfect, in other words, for Robert Hollingworth and I Fagiolini – the dazzlingly virtuosic vocal ensemble that thrives on the unpredictability, the emotion and the pure theatre of the baroque. The group's one-to-a-part performance allows every wench of detail to speak with passion and clarity.

Cast

Matthew Long - Orfeo

Ciara Hendrick - Messenger

Frederick Long - Caronte

9 other singers

8 English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble

10 Instrumentalists

Robert Hollingworth - Music Director

Tom Guthrie - stage director

Orfeo Trailer

“The way in which Long gradually opened Orfeo’s heart to the listener, creating ever more heart-tugging empathy, was very impressive.”

~ Opera Today

“Rarely do meaningful scholarship and artistry join in such harmony as here; rarely do we experience such subservience to music as on this occasion.”

~ Seen and Heard Intl.



Colossal Baroque: Benevoli Masses

I Fagiolini's most recent project exploring the 'Colossal Baroque'. Orazio Benevoli, maestro of the cappella giulia at St Peter's, Rome, composed these multi-choir masses for the finest churches in the city, and with an evident mastery of surround-sound that creates a truly immersive experience for an audience. The sheer quality of this undiscovered Baroque gem shines through, described by Andrew McGregor on BBC Record Review as an *"excellent series of recordings that have changed the landscape of 17th century music for multiple choirs"*.



"There's a near riot of glorious high tenors popping through the texture at every possible juncture...I Fagiolini at their sonorous, splendid best."

~ Gramophone

This three- or four-choir music has the potential to be part of a unique programme with larger Monteverdi works, Carissimi's Jephte or similar, and has territory premiere opportunities of what is already an award-winning project - the first album of the project being BBC Music Magazine's Recording of the Month on release, and the recent third and final album being Gramophone Magazine Editor's Choice in May 2026.



"Hollingworth gets it: this music of exquisite imagination and devotional depth deserves his subtle, intelligent, respectful approach. There's delicacy and chamber music as well as strength and proclamation in radiant performances of almost palpable joy"

~ Choir & Organ

16 singers and Robert Hollingworth
2 organs & 2 strings, or only organ

Victoria: Music's El Greco

What is it about the music of Spanish Renaissance master Tomás Luis de Victoria that lifts it above other composers? He seems, inexplicably, just to weave from better quality aural cloth. In the first few bars of 'Alma Redemptoris mater', you palpably feel the difference. As a sort of musical El Greco, there seems to be something in the aural brushwork that adds depth and spice, alongside an extraordinary joy and reverence in the text.

Hear Victoria's utterly sublime eight-voice motets from Renaissance Rome and Madrid alongside the highly intimate 'Tenebrae for Maundy Thursday' but also rarely heard jewels such as 'Nigra sum' (why does it begin in joyful triple time?) and the Song of Songs ecstasy of 'Vidi speciosam'. In I Fagiolini's 40th anniversary year, enjoy Victoria's serene polyphony with 8 singers and engaging introductions from director Robert Hollingworth.



I Fagiolini's 2024 album given 5* and described as "highly moving, enhancing our appreciation of Victoria's music" by BBC Music Magazine

Programme

Alma Redemptoris mater
Tenebrae for Maundy Thursday
Super flumina Babylonis
Ave Maria
Vere languores nostros
Tu es Petrus
Nigra sum
Vidi speciosam





Zefiro torna - Italian Spring!



Bring in the warm west winds of spring 'Monteverdi-style' in searing early baroque duets and ensembles. This brilliant team of soloists are all featured on I Fagiolini's new Monteverdi 1610 Vespers recording.

Monteverdi's new life in Venice from 1613 seemed to suit him. Instead of 5-part madrigals, he published playful solos, duets, trios - even a dance suite for five singers! The passion is breathtaking, the Venetian virtuosity dazzling: was Monteverdi finally happy?

Programme to Include

Zefiro torna

Ohime dove il mio ben?

Si dolce tormento

Parlo, misero o taccio

Damigella tutta bella

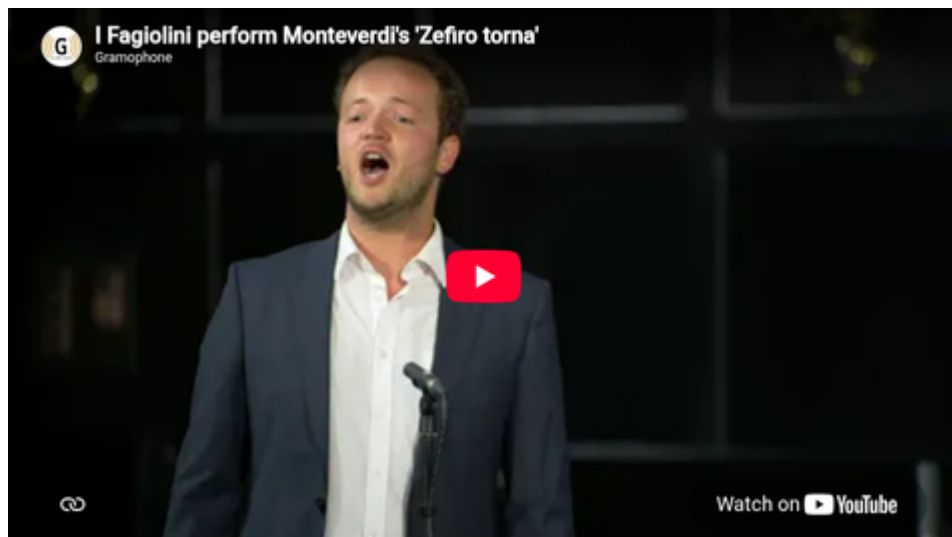
Vorrei baciarti

T'amo mia vita

Ballo - Tirsi e Clori

and more

5 singers with harp, chitarrone and organ



I Fagiolini perform 'Zefiro torna' from Monteverdi's *Scherzi Musicale* (1632). Taken from a concert filmed as part of 'Live From London' in 2020. Featuring Matthew Long and Nicholas Mulroy.



Monteverdi – Christmas Vespers

A glorious Venetian collection of Monteverdi's flamboyant psalms appropriate to Christmas Day, adorned with their plainchant liturgy. These virtuosic pieces are taken from Monteverdi's final publication of his lifetime, the 'Moral and spiritual wood' (Selva Morale e Spirituale) – the mature fruits of Monteverdi's Venetian period at San Marco, from the almost violent 'Dixit Dominus' to the dance-like 'Beatus vir'.

The Vespers conclude with a Magnificat and motet, taken from a few years earlier when Venice's multi-choir style was at its zenith. Giovanni Gabrieli's Magnificat a tre cori has a gravitas and raw power that surprises (see film below) while his 'Quem vidistis pastores' starts with the instrumental procession of the shepherds to see Christ, the excited cries of the shepherds themselves leading to the climax, 'O magnum mysterium' for the full forces.

16-18 performers (7 singers, 6-8 English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble, 2-4 continuo)



*“A rich
compilation...gently
moulded, resonantly
beautiful: a noble
celebration.”
~ The Guardian*



As heard on I Fagiolini's album 'Monteverdi: The Other Vespers', released in 2017

Videos

[Monteverdi – Laudate Pueri](#)
[Palestrina/Bovicelli – Ave verum corpus](#)
[Gabrieli – Magnificat](#)

Christmas with I Fagiolini

An alchemic and typically Fagiolini-esque mix of choral music and spoken word for Christmas.

You're at Midnight Mass: around you the stylish finesse of Charpentier's tuneful reworking of old French carols for voices, strings and flutes. But instead of the Mass' spoken text is Dylan Thomas' timeless memories of a small boy's Christmas in Wales (Mrs Prothero and the firemen...). Mulled into that are Howells' four Carol Anthems – including the magical Long, long ago, inspired by the poem of a British prisoner of war. And as the small boy remembers the snow falling outside his bedroom window, you can almost hear it in the beautiful falling lines of Holten's First snow.



Programme

- H. Howells – Long, long ago
D. Thomas – A Child's Christmas in Wales
M.A. Charpentier – Messe de Minuit
Kyrie & Gloria
D. Thomas – A Child's Christmas in Wales
H. Howells – A Spotless rose
M.A. Charpentier – Messe de Minuit
Credo
M.A. Charpentier – Laissez pâître vos bêtes
D. Thomas – A Child's Christmas in Wales
H. Howells – Here is the little door
M.A. Charpentier – Messe de Minuit
Sanctus/Benedictus
D. Thomas – A Child's Christmas in Wales
H. Howells – Sing Lullaby
M.A. Charpentier – Messe de Minuit
Agnus Dei
D. Thomas – A Child's Christmas in Wales
B. Holten – First Snow
12 singers, 9 instrumentalists, RH

“This is serious musicianship that never takes itself too seriously – the Holy Grail of concert-going.”

~ The Spectator