

# Grace Notes

NOTES FROM UPPER VALLEY BAROQUE

VOLUME 1

Upper Valley  
*Baroque*





# Welcome to Grace Notes, a new publication from Upper Valley Baroque!

**ALLAN and JO**

In the spirit of deepening our understanding of Baroque and Early Music, as well as our sense of community, we are initiating a publication for audience members and others interested in learning more. Part newsletter, part magazine, we hope you enjoy it. And we look forward to hearing from you! We plan to publish three times a year, just ahead of each Masterwork concert in UVB's season. It will be available in both print and digital editions, the latter being on our website, [uppervalleybaroque.org](http://uppervalleybaroque.org).

We have named this publication Grace Notes. In fact, grace notes—a familiar musical term—were NOT a feature of Baroque music. However, much of Baroque music was based on dance forms, which have a graceful style. And “notes” can be thought of both musically and as short messages.



## What do you think?

We want Grace Notes to bring you interesting and educational pieces that connect you to our work. Let us know what you want to see in this publication by emailing [baroqueuv@gmail.com](mailto:baroqueuv@gmail.com).

## Credits

Donna Grant Reilly, Editor-in-Chief  
Jo Shute, Contributing Editor  
Graphic Design by Elliott Mitzi



# From the Co-Founders

## ALLAN and JO

Two-and-a-half years ago, in September 2021, Upper Valley Baroque was established to offer world-class performances of great Baroque and Early Music to Upper Valley audiences, to provide educational opportunities, and to build a large and vibrant community of musicians and audience members who love and appreciate this music.

“Why?”, we are often asked. Simply put, we love this music and wanted more of it! Gifted with talented Filippo Ciabatti as Artistic Director, and a group of thoughtful and committed Board members, Upper Valley Baroque came into being. Our first concert was performed in December 2021. The enthusiastic response of Upper Valley concertgoers and donors since then has been amazing and humbling.

We hope you enjoy the added insights that Grace Notes provides, and we invite you to let us know your suggestions for future issues.

Looking forward to seeing you at the next Upper Valley Baroque concert!

Allan and Jo

## Table of Contents



Welcome to Grace Notes

From the Co-Founders

Interview With Filippo Ciabatti,  
Artistic Director

What is Baroque Music?

Musical Term: Continuo

Musician Profile: Todd Williams,  
Natural Horn

About the Natural Horn

Where's the Timpani?

Looking Ahead



## New Chamber Series

Upper Valley Baroque is introducing a Chamber Series this season, and the inaugural concert took place on January 20. The next Chamber Concert will be on March 30. The Chamber format provides an opportunity to hear small ensembles in a more intimate setting and to get to know these accomplished musicians.



# Grace Notes

NOTES FROM UPPER VALLEY BAROQUE

VOLUME 1

Upper Valley  
*Baroque*

FEBRUARY 2024



# Welcome to Grace Notes, a new publication from Upper Valley Baroque!

In the spirit of deepening our understanding of Baroque and Early Music, as well as our sense of community, we are initiating a publication for audience members and others interested in learning more. Part newsletter, part magazine, we hope you enjoy it. And we look forward to hearing from you!

We plan to publish three times a year, just ahead of each Masterwork concert in UVB's season. It will be available in both print and digital editions, the latter being on our website, [www.uppervalleybaroque.org](http://www.uppervalleybaroque.org).

We have named this publication Grace Notes. In fact, grace notes—a familiar musical term—were NOT a feature of Baroque music. However, much of Baroque music was based on dance forms, which have a graceful style. And “notes” can be thought of both musically and as short messages.



## What do you think?

We want Grace Notes to bring you interesting and educational pieces that connect you to our work. Let us know what you want to see in this publication by emailing [baroqueuv@gmail.com](mailto:baroqueuv@gmail.com).

## Table of Contents



Welcome to Grace Notes

From the Co-Founders

Interview With Filippo Ciabatti,  
Artistic Director

What is Baroque Music?

Musical Term: Continuo

Musician Profile: Todd Williams,  
Natural Horn

About the Natural Horn

Where's the Timpani?

Looking Ahead

## Credits

Donna Grant Reilly, Editor-in-Chief

Jo Shute, Contributing Editor

Graphic Design by Elliott Mitzi



## From the Co-Founders

### ALLAN and JO

Two-and-a-half years ago, in September 2021, Upper Valley Baroque was established to offer world-class performances of great Baroque and Early Music to Upper Valley audiences, to provide educational opportunities, and to build a large and vibrant community of musicians and audience members who love and appreciate this music.

“Why?”, we are often asked. Simply put, we love this music and wanted more of it! Gifted with talented Filippo Ciabatti as Artistic Director, and a group of thoughtful and committed Board members, Upper Valley Baroque came into being. Our first concert was performed in December 2021. The enthusiastic response of Upper Valley concertgoers and donors since then has been amazing and humbling.

We hope you enjoy the added insights that Grace Notes provides, and we invite you to let us know your suggestions for future issues.

Looking forward to seeing you at the next Upper Valley Baroque concert!

Allan and Jo



## New Chamber Series

Upper Valley Baroque is introducing a Chamber Series this season, and the inaugural concert took place on January 20. The next Chamber Concert will be on March 30. The Chamber format provides an opportunity to hear small ensembles in a more intimate setting and to get to know these accomplished musicians.



# An Interview With Filippo Ciabatti, Artistic Director

DONNA REILLY

*The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

**What was your reaction when Jo and Allan approached you with an idea for Upper Valley Baroque?**

My reaction was enthusiastic, curious, and intrigued about doing a project like that, and about what could be built. Of course when we started there were a lot of things we didn't know how they'd work out. We had an idea in mind, but we didn't quite know the full extent of the direction we wanted the idea to take. Then we started to think about what would make the most sense for the Upper Valley, the community, for the three of us in our own paths of life, and my own personal career—all of these things we thought about, and then we started to shape the organization.

**How do you decide what programs you're going to put on?**

It depends on many things. I always feel it's a shared effort in many ways. Jo and Allan and I have extensive conversations about programming. First of all we try to highlight the different great and wonderful things our group presents in the choir, the orchestra, the solo instrumentalists, the soloist singers, all of the wonderful sections of the orchestra and the choir. How to give a chance for everyone to shine, right? We think about what our audience would like. How can we find a season that is varied enough, but has a theme overall? So we finally created a season that had three main-stage kinds of masterworks. In two of them we really highlighted the choir, together with the orchestra; and one of them became an



instrumental concert. We tried to end each season with a big masterpiece: we had the Bach Mass in B Minor, we had the Monteverdi Vespers. And we try to make a balance with something known and something a little more off the beaten path for chorus and orchestra. So trying to combine all these elements is really a big balancing act. And then, of course there come also my personal interests, right? But I think, as a musical director planning a season, you have your own personal loves and interests, but it's only one side of the factor. You can't only do what the conductor wants to do; you need to make sure the season is successful. In the end, the purpose is to create a deeply satisfying musical experience so the audience will come back. Because, you know, there's no music without an audience.

**How do you go about choosing the musicians you want?**

When Jo and Allan originally came to see me about forming UV Baroque, they said, "We love Baroque music; we'd like to see something done with it. What can we do?" The original





**So, now that things seem to be going along so well, have you had time to think about what you might like to see happen in the future?**

Well, I'm happy with how we're building musically, and very happy and grateful with how the audience is continuing to follow the group so enthusiastically. I'd like the group to grow. To continue to be rooted in the Upper Valley, but I think we have the potential to grow, to expand our seasons, and to perform in other venues where we can showcase what we do. Hopefully we'll be able to take on recording projects, to do tours. So my hope is—and I think I can say in good faith that this group has the potential to do so—that we continue to spread our wings in the Upper Valley and outside. We'll remain rooted here, because it's important that the Upper Valley continues to view us as part of its own cultural and artistic offering.

**Would you like to say a few words about the concert that's coming up next?**

Yes! We have a very exciting concert ahead that is all music of Handel, and of course no

one dislikes Handel. He's one of those composers that's beloved by everyone. My composition teacher used to say, "Handel has sunshine in his music," and it's true. The *Water Music* has an interesting story: Handel's relationship with the King had its ups and downs; Handel was often in disgrace, but always came back into favor. Handel was a great entrepreneur and he was a real superstar. He was commissioned to write this music, which was basically planned for this boat trip on the Thames. We have records that show it was a huge production, where everything was doubled; it was really a spectacle. I was reading that the King loved it so much that it was repeated over and over again on this trip, so it was immediately very popular. It was written in three suites, which are really a collection of dances featuring different instruments. We'll do all three, and we'll intersperse them with other works by Handel: some arias—sung by Mary Bonhag, our own local soprano soloist—and the Overture to Handel's oratorio, *Solomon*, an instrumental piece that's quite popular. The program is extremely enjoyable, Handel-focused, and rich in colors and rhythms. ●





# What is Baroque Music?

DONNA REILLY

The Baroque period began around 1600-1750 at roughly the time of Monteverdi, Corelli, and Vivaldi, and concluded with the music of Bach and Handel around 1750. The term “Baroque” comes from a Portuguese word, *barroco*, meaning “strangely-shaped pearl.” Music critics in the 19th century thought Bach and Handel’s music was much too ornamental and exaggerated. But the name endured, surviving its negative connotation, and today we regard the music composed during that period to be some of the richest and most beautiful in the history of music.

**Dramatic contrast** is an important characteristic of Baroque music: with strong dynamics, as well as contrasting solo and ensemble parts. Soloists, both instrumental and vocal, were given music that was meant to demonstrate their talents; the results were often remarkable performances of amazing virtuosity. They also excelled at **improvisation**, especially on repeated sections. Instruments, such as the violin and trumpet,

enjoyed renewed interest at this time. *Basso continuo*, or thorough bass (definition below), was practiced throughout the Baroque period and served as foundation for the richly-**ornamented** music that evolved above and around it.

Because a Baroque score has little information aside from the notes, the conductor and the musicians must make informed decisions about how it is to be played. If they are playing period instruments, they must adjust their techniques to account for how those instruments differ from modern versions. We can’t really know exactly how this music sounded 400 years ago, but it has enjoyed a tremendous revival in our time, and many ensembles have been formed with the intent of performing Baroque music as close to the original as can be accomplished with the information we have. Conservatories such as Julliard offer programs in “historical performance.”

This music provides great listening pleasure, with the ability to soothe and excite at the same time. Baroque composers shared a firm belief that music is an important means of communication; one which transcends time, spoken language, and political borders. Perhaps that is reason enough to continue performing it today. ●

## Musical Term: Continuo

**Continuo**, also referred to as “Basso Continuo.” Refers not to a specific instrument, but rather to a role played by one or more musicians—specifically the role of playing the bass line in Baroque music. The continuo part can be played by a cellist, gambist, bassoonist, double bassist, harpsichordist, organist, lutenist, guitarist, or harpist, or any combination of these. The keyboard and plucked instrument players fill out the harmony by adding chords over the bass line in much the same way a guitarist plays chords in folk or pop music. The chords are indicated by a system of numbers and symbols called “figured bass.” The presence of the continuo in chamber, orchestral, and choral music is a defining feature of Baroque music—its use quickly faded in the classical era that followed.

Source: [www.tafelmusik.org](http://www.tafelmusik.org)





## Musician Profile: Todd Williams

JO SHUTE

Todd will be joining Upper Valley Baroque for the first time to perform in “Handel’s *Water Music* & More”.

### **How did you get interested in and start playing the Natural Horn?**

It was dumb luck, really. Chalk it up to being at the right place at the right time. I’ll never forget it – it was early in my tutelage at Indiana University. Richard Seraphinoff was my very first teacher. (Prior to college, I was self-taught. I had never had formal private lessons until college. My father, also an IU Music alum, gave me a book by Philip Farkas called, “The Art of French Horn Playing” and by reading it, I taught myself how to play the

horn.) Unbeknownst to me, Rick (who had also studied with Philip Farkas — as well as Lowell Greer and other Maestros of the horn), was a major figure in the Natural Horn world in America.

One day during a lesson, I was frustrated while playing a particular étude; I’m certain Rick was equally frustrated at hearing me butcher that same étude. As the horn dropped into my lap while sighing, I pointed to a valveless natural horn in his studio. You see, Rick’s studio was lined with natural horns: hanging on the walls, lying on his desk, there were even a few on the floor – it was heaven, I just hadn’t realized at first. I asked, “what’s that,” pointing to a natural horn. “Oh this?” he replied, while proceeding to hand it to me. “Try it.” I played my first notes. And it was love at first sight. And that moment changed my life.

The following semester I signed up for natural horn lessons in addition to my modern valve horn lessons. Essentially, I went from no lessons to double lessons a week every year for six years during my time at Indiana. (I had a lot of catching up to do.) Toward the end of my time at IU, I’d even swapped my focus from the valve horn to the valveless horn, ultimately earning degrees in both.

### **Since you play both natural and modern horn, what is required of you when you switch between them?**

As a Principal horn, many of the same principles remain across the board: leadership, guidance, be the example, etc. In terms of performance execution, you really must focus on fundamentals. Good basic tone production, articulation, rhythm — those are universal. There are a few small details that are specific to the natural horn (for example, the overall length of pipe – i.e. different crooks – will affect response time), and there are some articulation variations that differ from Baroque v. Classical v. modern that must be addressed, but it’s really style and nuance and sense of phrasing that separates a modern player from a period player. One isn’t greater than the other; it’s just different. And these attributes must be at your fingertips if you wish to toggle between the two worlds.

## Do you have a favorite or most memorable venue where you have performed?

Ooooooh so many. Over the course of my career, I've had the distinct privilege of performing in nearly every major concert hall on the East Coast of America. Most recently, I'd have to say performing in Carnegie Hall with the Philadelphia Orchestra undergoing the famed marathon performance of all (five!) Rachmaninoff piano concertos (in one day!) with Yuja Wang soloing and Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting simply must feature on this list. And I won't even go into last year's European Festivals Tour where we performed at the *Elbphilharmonie* in Hamburg or the *Philharmonie Berlin*, or KKL in Lucerne or the *Philharmonie de Paris* — one of the all-time greatest acoustics, by the way. I've been pretty lucky in this life.

On the Natural Horn, it's always a thrill to perform in Symphony Hall in Boston as well as in the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC., but I must say, an all-time high would be performing in the *Opéra Royal* in the *Château de Versailles* in France. Actually, I've done it twice. The first time was for Monsigny's *Le Roi et le Fermier* using a set dating back to 1762! In the archives of Versailles, it's said that Marie Antoinette (an avid opera fan in fact), attended a performance of the work, which utilized this very set. The second time was for a double-bill of Philidor's *Les Femmes Vengées* and Mozart's *Così Fan Tutti* (in French) using a similarly historic set. Being in that space performing that music on old instruments, it was simply magical.

## Are there any “special projects” you are working on this year?

As I write this, I'm currently working on a program with the Philadelphia Orchestra featuring a world premiere of a violin concerto performed by Gil Shaham as well as a Philly premier of a choral piece (commissioned by Yannick Nézet-Séguin) written in response to COVID specifically to be paired with the Brahms *Requiem*. It's been a very moving week of truly meaningful music making.

# About the Natural Horn

BY TODD WILLIAMS

The Natural horn is a broad term referring to a brass instrument made of sheet metal that's been annealed, hammered, and curved into the shape we recognize today.

The term 'natural' refers to the fact that there's nothing added to the instrument in order to alter the pitch. The instrument is therefore limited to the notes of the “naturally” existing harmonic series. In short, there are no valves. The player must use a combination of air speed and muscle tension to create a sound.

To be more specific: a horn during the Baroque period is considered a Baroque horn; a horn during the Classical period is considered a Classical horn. Each is an example of a Natural horn, however they look different and are played differently.

A Baroque horn is played with the bell up in the air. It was up to the players to bend the non-harmonic tones as best they could in order to achieve the desired pitch.

A Classical horn is played with the bell pointed down to the ground, with one hand inserted into the bell in order to achieve more notes.

In its most primitive state, the 'horn' stemmed from animal horns. Boring out the center gave way to a conical device that was used as a means of communication. It wasn't considered a musical instrument at all. It was a tool.

This tool was integral to the art of the hunt. As the hunt became more popular among royalty, the horn became more entrenched into the culture of the hunt. This association would only grow stronger. Because of this, horns were often depicted in hunting scenes in opera and later in symphonic forms. Over time, this 'tool' would eventually be seen as a musical instrument.

On the Natural Horn: Just after my time with UVB, I'll be performing Mozart's *Horn Quintet* in Boston. This is always a special opportunity. It's a marvelous piece (and certainly one of my favorites) that, in many ways, is much more demanding of the player's abilities than any of his concerti. Aside from that, I have so many stalwarts this season: Bach's *B Minor Mass* along with his *Brandenburg Concerti*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, as well as (another!) Brahms *Requiem* and all on period instruments. It's going to be a fun few months!

### Do you have any "horn" stories relating to Handel's *Water Music*?

Actually, Handel's *Water Music* is massively important to me. I was 10 years old when I knew I wanted to be a horn player. I grew up in a musical family. There was always music playing. One of the recordings that I absolutely wore out was a cassette tape of Handel's *Water Music*.

### Is there anything else you would like people to know?

I'm a huge foodie and an even bigger lover of wine. During the pandemic when I wasn't able to perform, for a very brief moment, I actually considered becoming a sommelier. ●

A preeminent exponent of the Natural Horn in America, Todd Williams is an active performer and educator based in Philadelphia. In high demand, he currently serves as Principal Horn of numerous ensembles across the country including Philharmonia Baroque, the Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, Trinity Baroque, Apollo's Fire, Mercury, Opera Lafayette, *Tempesta di Mare*, and more.

Source: [juilliard.edu/music/faculty/williams-todd](http://juilliard.edu/music/faculty/williams-todd)

## Where's the Timpani?

In hiring musicians for our February program of Handel's *Water Music*, we booked a timpanist. But when Jo received the scores she'd ordered, she discovered there was no score for timpani. Concerned about this, she immediately contacted timpanist Jonathan Hess and broke the news to him. "What will you do?" she asked, thinking he'd be upset.

"I wouldn't worry about it," he said. "In fact, that's not at all surprising. You know, Handel wrote this music to be performed from a barge on the Thames River. There was simply no room for timpani on that barge, so he didn't score for it." (A typical set of timpani consists of two large drums.) Here's a quote from the BBC website that speaks to this issue:

*Unlike many pieces Handel wrote, the original score for Water Music doesn't survive, and none of the later versions exactly match. The piece is usually split into three separate suites made up of 22 self-contained movements, but no one is quite sure how they fit together, in what order the movements come, or even whether Water Music was actually performed in its entirety in July 1717 or created for different occasions. Another mystery: how on earth did Handel squeeze a harpsichord and timpani (kettle drums), which are used in most versions of Water Music, into a barge? (Most probably he didn't take the risk, and added them to the score later.)*

"But how can you play if you don't have a score?" Jo asked. "Oh," he said, "not a problem. I'll just work from the 2nd trumpet part and improvise. That's usually what we do for the *Water Music*."







Live Baroque music, beautifully performed, with learning opportunities for all

## **Board Members**

John Gerstmayr, Chair  
Benjamin Van Vliet, Vice-Chair  
Jennifer Chambers  
Deecie Denison  
Linda Fowler  
Mark Nelson  
David Nierenberg  
Donna Reilly  
Janet Watton  
Allan Wieman, President  
Jo Shute, Business Manager

## **Support Our Work**

at [www.uppervalleybaroque.org](http://www.uppervalleybaroque.org)

# Looking Ahead



## **Handel's Water Music & More**

Saturday, February 10, 3:00 pm at Chandler Center for the Arts (Randolph)  
Sunday, February 11, 3:00pm at St. Denis (Hanover)

*This upbeat orchestral program features Handel's beloved and regal Water Music, a group of suites first performed on a barge in the Thames River in 1717 to welcome King George to England. It is paired with three short Handel works featuring small ensembles and outstanding UVB soprano Mary Bonhag.*



## **Baroque Charmers: Quartet of Low Strings**

Saturday, March 30, 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm at UUCUV (Norwich)

*Georg Christoph Wagenseil was an Austrian composer, keyboard player and teacher. He was one of the pivotal figures in the development of the Classical style in Vienna and served as a precursor to Haydn and W. A. Mozart. His early works are Baroque, while his later pieces are in the Classical style. He composed a number of operas, choral works, symphonies, concertos, chamber music, and keyboard pieces. (Source: Kennedy Center and Wikipedia)*



## **Bach's St. John Passion**

Saturday, May 18, 7:00 pm at Lebanon Opera House (Lebanon)  
Sunday, May 19, 3:00 pm at Chandler Center for the Arts (Randolph)

*One of J.S. Bach's major oratorios, the St. John Passion dramatically recounts the story of Jesus' crucifixion as told in the Gospel of St. John. Upper Valley Baroque brings this powerful masterpiece to life with a talented ensemble of singers, super-star soloists, and orchestral musicians playing on period instruments – under the direction of Maestro Filippo Ciabatti.*



## **“Preparing to Hear the Masterworks: Bach's St. John Passion”**

Musicologist Mark Nelson, hosted by Upper Valley Music Center  
Offered as both in-person and on-line sessions.  
Enroll at [www.uvmusic.org/news/classes/preparing-to-hear-masterworks](http://www.uvmusic.org/news/classes/preparing-to-hear-masterworks)



## **“Bach, the St. John Passion, and Anti-Semitism”**

Virtual Panel Discussion, Early May  
Details forthcoming in the next issue of Grace Notes, via email, and at [www.uppervalleybaroque.org](http://www.uppervalleybaroque.org)



Masterwork Concert



Chamber Series



Education/Events