

MUSIC REVIEW

# A Brother and Sister Join to Perform in the Open Air

By VIVIEN SCHWEITZER  
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The Canadian violinist Lara St. John has dedicated much energy recently to contemporary music and unorthodox projects, recording works by [John Corigliano](#) and the Australian composer Matthew Hindson as well as a disc of polka-inspired music yet to be released. But she first came into the spotlight with music of Bach, which she performed in public appearances as a child and has since recorded.

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On Tuesday evening at the Naumburg Bandshell in Central Park, Ms. St.

John was joined by her older brother, Scott St. John — a violinist, violist and member of the St. Lawrence String Quartet — for a spirited performance of Bach's Concerto for Two Violins in D minor (BWV 1043). The work concluded an excellent concert by the Knights, a dynamic young chamber orchestra.

The St. Johns first performed the concerto in public when Lara (now 38) was 4 and Scott was 6. Their compelling

collaboration here was notable for its fiery energy and nuanced phrasing. The large audience, many members armed with umbrellas and glancing frequently at the darkening sky, was attentive throughout. The mood was shattered only by a drunk, wandering through the crowd and shouting expletives.

Ms. St. John also offered an expressive and poised rendition of Bach's Violin Concerto in E (BWV 1042), idiosyncratic in some of its phrasing. The Knights, who played standing, accompanied her with an admirable buoyant energy. Textures were impressively balanced despite the inevitable microphone distortions.

Colin Jacobsen, the violinist, and Alex Sopp, a flutist, were fine soloists in a fleet-footed interpretation of Bach's "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 5 in D. Steven Beck's dazzling harpsichord cadenza drew energetic applause.

Andrea Griminelli, another flutist, performed with verve and polish in Bach's Orchestral

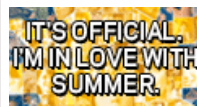
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Suite No. 2 in B minor. Speaking from the stage he lightheartedly reminded the audience that the work's movements are short and don't require applause after each one.

The program opened with a colorful performance of Biber's "Battaglia" for strings and continuo, which Mr. Jacobsen aptly described from the stage as a "really funky piece from the 17th century" by "one of the more forward-thinking composers of his time." Biber imitates the sounds of war with percussive techniques: the violinists tap their instruments with their fingers, and the cellists hit their strings with their bows. A harmonically adventurous, dissonant interlude well illustrates Biber's proclivities as a 17th-century modernist.

*The next concert at the Naumburg Bandshell features the Naumburg Orchestra and the clarinetist Alexander Fiterstein on July 7, Central Park at 70th Street; [naumburgconcerts.org](http://naumburgconcerts.org).*

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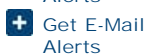
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