



En Garde!

Apollo's Fire and its founder-director Jeannette Sorrell to join forces with members of the English Baroque Soloists for a thrilling musical fencing match during weekend residency at St-Martin-in-the-Fields (Friday 24 & Saturday April 2026)

American period-instrument ensemble's latest UK tour also includes a recreation of music made in the four quarters of Jerusalem's Old City, the imagined sounds of a 17th-century pub and a visit to a Middle Eastern café of c.1700

Tour ends with a repeat of *Fencing Match* programme at Snape Maltings Concert Hall (Sunday 26 April), including double concertos by Vivaldi, Telemann and Johann Sebastian Bach

*'Apollo's Fire, the lauded group from Cleveland, brings joyous spontaneity to its performances,'
The New Yorker*

Apollo's Fire have inspired capacity audiences at home in the United States and overseas with their joyous artistry and passionate commitment to building bridges between different cultures and communities. The GRAMMY®-winning early music ensemble, led by their Artistic Director and founder Jeannette Sorrell, are set to return to the UK next spring for their second residency at St-Martin-in-the-Fields (Friday 24 & Saturday 25 April 2026) and to give a concert at Snape Maltings (Sunday 26 April). Their tour programmes, complete with a captivating collaboration with principal players from the English Baroque Soloists, a late-night date in the St Martin's crypt and an evening of music from Jerusalem's Old City, are guaranteed to project the restorative spirit of a group hailed by *The New York Times* for their 'wonderful vitality' and by the *Telegraph* for their irresistible blend of 'European stylishness and American can-do entrepreneurialism'.

Jeannette Sorrell's status as guest conductor has soared in recent seasons. She appeared with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra for the third time in October 2025, conducting four concerts in its subscription series of works by Mozart and Joseph Bologne, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, and leading one of its Young People's Concerts. Other highlights include guest dates with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Lincoln Center Festival Orchestra, the Seattle Symphony, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Baltimore, Houston and Detroit Symphony Orchestras, and the Hallé. Back home in the United States, Apollo's Fire's has been playing sold out concerts at its highly successful subscription series in Cleveland and Chicago. David Walker, the organisation's Managing Director, says that he is "continually inspired by the ensemble's freshness and emotional impact".

Sorrell and her band scored a popular success with their debut weekend at St-Martin-in-the-Fields in 2023. Their latest series at the historic central London venue offers a chance for audiences to experience the delights and drama of music made for aristocratic audiences, alehouse revels, sacred rituals, street parties and café entertainments. "We had a wonderful time at St Martin's three years ago," recalls Jeannette Sorrell. "Our audiences joined us to create a real party atmosphere. We want to bring that to life again. Many of our concerts contain elements of storytelling or theatre. It's fascinating to consider the multiverse of musicians four centuries ago, who would play in a vespers service in the evening and go to the pub afterwards. That's what musicians did then and still do today. After our final concert on Saturday night, we'll certainly head for the pub!"

The festivities begin at lunchtime on Friday 24 April with a chamber programme entitled *Pubs and Palaces of 1610* – a richly flavoured banquet of pieces that range from the British Isles to the Mediterranean basin and feature voice, lute, oud, harps, violin and viola da gamba. Apollo's Fire launch their lunchtime programme with John Playford's fiddle variations on the dance tune *Bellamira* and

continue with a selection of lute songs performed by soprano Andréa Walker. “Our harpist, Anna O’Connell, who happens to be a fine soprano and a genuine troubadour, will accompany herself in Dowland’s *Flow my Tears*, then take up her other harp to play a Spanish solo piece,” notes Sorrell. “Lucine Musaelian will accompany herself on the gamba in two Armenian songs, and Ronnie Malley, who’s quite simply a musical genius, will play an improvisatory *taxim* on the oud. Their session will end with *Longha Nahawand*, a wild and free traditional Turkish/ Arabic dance.”

Friday evening’s concert, *Fencing Match – Duelling Double Concertos*, brings Apollo’s Fire together with members of the English Baroque Soloists. Jeannette Sorrell proposed the collaboration after attending the cycle of Beethoven’s symphonies given by the period-instrument ensemble’s close relation, the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, at St-Martin-in-the-Fields in May 2024. Their Friday evening concert opens with the first movement of Vivaldi’s Concerto in D major for two violins and two cellos RV 564, featuring pairs of British and American soloists, presented here as an overture to Telemann’s Concerto in E minor for recorder and flute TWV 52:e1; Johann Sebastian Bach’s Concerto in D minor for two violins BWV 1043, with Bojan Čičić from the English Baroque Soloists and Apollo’s Fire concertmaster Alan Choo as soloists; and a suite of dances drawn by Jeannette Sorrell from Marin Marais’ opera *Alcione*. The programme concludes with Vivaldi’s Concerto in A minor for two violins Op.3 No.8, with Alan Choo and Davina Clarke as soloists, and Jeannette Sorrell’s latest arrangement of ‘La Folia’ (‘Madness’) from the Venetian composer’s Trio Sonata in D minor Op.1 No.12, complete with a mini-duel between two cellists and spontaneous battles between pairs of soloists.

“We performed *Fencing Match* for the first time at last summer’s Ravinia Festival,” says Sorrell. The idea for the programme, she adds, arose after she came across the codes of conduct expected of aristocratic students at the fencing academies or *salles* of 18th-century France. “Baroque double concertos are very much like fencing in their manners. When I began reading about the highly stylized etiquette practised at the fencing schools, I discovered these remarkable, sometimes hilarious rules. You see the same refined aesthetics here as you do in baroque concertos. The fencing manuals speak of different affects, different moods, the way that you must be courteous to your partner, so that if your opponent dropped their sword, for instance, you were expected to pick it up and return it to them courteously. Fencing etiquette displayed many different affects, just like those you find in the contrasting movements of a baroque concerto.”

Fencing Match reflects the virtuosity of Apollo’s Fire and the high-octane energy generated whenever Jeannette Sorrell and her colleagues make music. “We really love playing together,” she says. “I think this concert, given in collaboration with superb UK-based musicians, will be extra special. Apollo’s Fire has a rather distinctive vibe. I’m sure that we will be inspired by performing with guests whom we really respect and admire and hope that they will be inspired by us.” The transatlantic protagonists will travel to Suffolk for a repeat performance at Snape Maltings concert hall on Sunday evening.

Apollo’s Fire crown their St Martin’s residency with *O Jerusalem! Crossroads of Three Faiths*. The programme presents a vision of an ancient city in which the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam coexisted for many centuries, often in harmony, and cultivated a rich repertoire of sacred and secular songs. Its diverse contents require twenty-six singers and instrumentalists, including parts for singers, oud, theorbo, medieval harp, zither, strings and percussion. “We will take a musical tour through Jerusalem and its ancient Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Armenian quarters,” notes Sorrell. “This concert brings together an amazing group of international artists. We have an Israeli recorder player, Daphna Mor, and Ronnie Malley, a Palestinian-American oud player, both of whom are incredible virtuosos. There will be several Jewish musicians with us, and then a wonderful London-based Armenian guest, Lucine Musaelian, who plays the gamba and sings. So it’s a very special company of artists.”

O Jerusalem! spans pieces that date from the early 1500s to around 1800 and bear witness to a period of vibrant musical cross-fertilisation and fusion. The bill includes an Arabic love song; improvised *taximuri* rooted in ancient Ottoman culture, the haunting *Tzur mishelo akhalnu* among them; Jewish cantorial chant; the sublime *Gloria Patri* from Monteverdi’s Vespers of 1610; the Muslim call to prayer; and an early setting of the 10th-century Christian prayer to the Virgin Mary, *Sancta Maria succure miseris*. “We have performed this programme in New York City, Chicago and our home base in Cleveland,” says Sorrell. “But I think it’s perhaps even more timely now than ever.”

Five members of Apollo’s Fire will stir the musical melting pot again during their late-night date in the crypt at St Martins. They close their residency’s first day with *Baklava Bash*, a beguiling evocation of

Middle Eastern café culture from c.1700. The programme includes the exquisite sounds of Tina Bergmann's hammered dulcimer together with contributions from Ronnie Malley, Daphna Mor and Apollo's Fire violinists Alan Choo and Emi Tanabe. "*Baklava Bash* will be highly virtuosic and great fun, a real late-night romp in the crypt," says Jeannette Sorrell. "In Apollo's Fire we've been collaborating with Israeli and Palestinian folk musicians for several years – and we've all become close friends as we've toured *O Jerusalem!* together. *Baklava Bash* is what happens when a bunch of us go to a Turkish café after finishing a concert – we're in a celebratory mood, and so happy to be playing folk music of the traditions that we love and honour. It's a celebration of true musical friendship."

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Wednesday, January 7th 2026

Friday 24 April 2026, 1pm
St-Martin-in-the-Fields, London

Jeannette Sorrell artistic director | **Andréa Walker** soprano | **Anna O'Connell** soprano and harps | **Lucine Musaelian** soprano and viola da gamba | **Alan Choo** violin | **William Simms** theorbo and guitar | **Ronnie Malley** Oud | **Apollo's Fire**

Pubs and Palaces of 1610:

[Event link](#)

Friday 24 April 2026, 7pm
St-Martin-in-the-Fields, London

Jeannette Sorrell artistic director and conductor | **Apollo's Fire** | **Musicians from the English Baroque Soloists**

Fencing Match – Duelling Double Concertos:

Vivaldi Allegro from Concerto for Two Violins and Two Cellos
Telemann Concerto in E minor for Flute and Recorder
Bach Concerto in D minor for Two Violins
Rameau Dances from *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* and *Dardanus*
Vivaldi Concerto in A minor for Two Violins
Vivaldi (arr. Sorrell) *La Folia*, after Sonata in D minor

[Event link](#)

Friday 24 April 2026, 9:15pm
Crypt of St-Martin-in-the-Fields, London

Jeannette Sorrell artistic director | **Apollo's Fire** | **Ronnie Malley** Oud | **Alan Choo** violin | **Emi Tanabe** violin | **Tina Bergmann** hammered-dulcimer

Baklava Bash – A Middle-Eastern Celebration:

[Event link](#)

Saturday 25 April 2026, 7pm
St-Martin-in-the-Fields, London

Jeannette Sorrell artistic director and conductor | **Apollo's Fire**

O Jerusalem! Crossroads of Three Faiths

[Event link](#)

Sunday 26 April 2026, 7pm
Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Suffolk

Jeannette Sorrell artistic director and conductor | **Apollo's Fire** | **Musicians from the English Baroque Soloists**

Fencing Match – Duelling Double Concertos:

Vivaldi Allegro from Concerto for Two Violins and Two Cellos

Telemann Concerto in E minor for Flute and Recorder

Bach Concerto in D minor for Two Violins

Rameau Dances from *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* and *Dardanus*

Vivaldi Concerto in A minor for Two Violins

Vivaldi (arr. Sorrell) *La Folia*, after Sonata in D minor

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