

LSO St Luke's

CHAMBER MUSIC

BBC
RADIO 3

ORNAMENTS OF THE BAROQUE

Thursday 3 October 2024 6–7.05pm

Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Francesco Geminiani Sonata in A minor Op 5 No 6

Johann Sebastian Bach Adagio BWV 974

Benedetto Marcello Sonata in G minor No 4 Op 2

Francesco Geminiani Sonata in C major Op 5 No 3

Johann Sebastian Bach Larghetto BWV 972

Antonio Vivaldi Sonata in E minor No 5

Victor Julien-Laferrière cello

Justin Taylor harpsichord

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

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THE CRYPT BAR

The Crypt Bar is open from one hour before concerts and during the interval (where applicable). Please note, card payments only. Only cold drinks are permitted inside the Jerwood Hall.

PROGRAMME NOTE WRITER

Mark Seow is a violinist, musicologist, writer and broadcaster from London. He has been a broadcaster for BBC Radio 3 since 2021, presenting over 50 editions of *The Early Music News*, appeared on *Record Review* and *Free Thinking*, and as a guest musicologist for the televised BBC Proms. He has been a critic and writer for *Gramophone* since 2019.

In accordance with the requirements of Islington Council, persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are strictly forbidden without formal consent from LSO St Luke's.

Please make sure that digital watch alarms and mobile phones are switched off during the performance.

Today's Programme

Francesco Geminiani, apparently nicknamed *Il Furibondo* ('The Madman') by the composer and violinist Giuseppe Tartini, for his expressively rhythmic way of playing, was born in Lucca, Italy. After stints in Milan and Naples – where music historian Charles Burney criticised his 'wild and unsteady time-keeping' – he arrived in London in 1714, almost instantly making a name for himself as a virtuoso violinist. But courting English royalty wasn't enough for him, and like various other Italian musicians, he ended up in Dublin where he founded a concert series and remained until his death.

Geminiani's Opus 5 is a collection of six sonatas for cello and basso continuo and today we hear **Nos 3 and 6**. They were evidently popular as they were published in London, Paris and The Hague in the 1740s (possibly another sign of Geminiani the canny businessman). The four-movement Sonata in C major embodies the historical shift from viola da gamba to cello: the athletic sequences in the second movement Allegro would be difficult on the viola da gamba, and the lyrical Affettuoso is even more obviously in the galant style. Yet in the sixth sonata of the collection, Geminiani seems to look backwards, reminisce even. The second section of its last movement is characteristic of a tombeau: French ornamentation and tenderly unravelling melodies speak of more of the traditions of Lully and Marais.

Antonio Vivaldi's opus of six cello sonatas was first published in Paris in 1740. A manuscript in the hands of a Venetian copyist exists from circa 1724–26. This was possibly copied out for Count Gergy, the French ambassador in Venice (whose arrival in Venice is dramatically depicted by Canaletto – in this painting the Count disembarks onto the quay in front of the Doge's Palace, causing quite a stir). The manuscript might at first suggest that Gergy was a hobbyist cellist. But rather it documents a cultural exchange: Gergy commissioned music from Vivaldi for noble patrons in Paris. **Sonata No 5**, like the others in the opus, is structured in a slow-fast-slow-fast ordering. Vivaldi clearly enjoyed dramatising the physicality of the cello: virtuosic string crossings characterise the second movement, while the second Largo explores the cello's top A-string in a soaring cantabile.

The reach of Italian composers across Europe was felt even in the arguably backwater towns of Thuringia. **Johann Sebastian Bach's** interest in Venetian styles emerged most obviously in the practice of transcription. Some particularly classy musicological detective work – which has included looking through itemised household bills – has placed some of Bach's transcriptions to his time in Weimar where he was employed by the ducal family of Saxe-Weimar.

Today's Programme

The family loved music, especially the young Prince Johann Ernst who was a keen violinist and keyboard player. Returning from trips to Amsterdam, the Prince brought back not cases of tulip bulbs (unlike Telemann!), but rather concerto scores. Bach's job, ostensibly, was to transcribe these works for harpsichord or organ solo. As Alessandro Marcello's Oboe Concerto in D minor was published by Roger in Amsterdam in 1717, Bach was potentially working from a pre-publication manuscript version of the Concerto that passed through eager hands of the rich.

In the **Adagio from BWV 974**, Bach transforms the second movement of Marcello's Concerto. Bach embroidered Marcello's original oboe melody with ornamentation suitable for the keyboard – it is a glorious glimpse into Bach's brain for how he might have improvised off the cuff (and is thus a useful historical source for 18th-century keyboard ornamentation, too). **Bach's Larghetto BWV 972** is an arrangement of Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in D major Op 3 No 9. In this instance, Bach transforms pulsating orchestral chords into a rippling sequence over which a melody in the harpsichordist's right hand eventually appears. It is a stunning example of a written-out melody that sounds as if it is being improvised.

Alessandro hailed from the noble Marcello family, and his younger brother, **Benedetto Marcello**, was even more celebrated as a musician (Benedetto also practiced law, combining a career in public service with that in music). Alongside his fame, there was also scandal: Benedetto married his singing student in a secret ceremony – which, as a nobleman, was unlawful. The Opus 2 from this Marcello is a little confusing (there are also 12 recorder sonatas published as his opus 2 from 1712 in Venice). Marcello considered the **Sonata in G minor** performed today as a 'duet' for cello and basso continuo (and, allowing for some flexibility, noting that it could also be performed on the viola da gamba). It was published in a collection in Amsterdam (c 1736). The opening Adagio features an elegant exchange that recalls the ornamentation and phrasing typical of writing for the viola da gamba. But the other movements are more idiomatic for cello: lively semiquaver passages in the following Allegro and the almost relentlessly spinning, gigue-like final movement demonstrate how the cello was increasingly emerging as an instrument of virtuosity.

Victor Julien-Laferrière cello



© Lyodoh Kaneko

Victor Julien-Laferrière has been described as 'one of the most reliable talents of the young generation of French cellists' by *Diapason* magazine. Winner of the Queen Elisabeth Competition (2017), he has also received first prize and two special prizes at the 2012 Prague Spring International Competition and the 2018 Victoire de la Musique (France).

Further afield, Victor Julien-Laferrière has performed with renowned orchestras around the world, including the Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and the BBC Philharmonic under the direction of prestigious conductors such as Kristiina Poska, Nathalie Stutzmann, Stéphane Denève and Ben Glassberg. His recital and chamber music projects have led to performances at prestigious venues including Concertgebouw Amsterdam,

Konzerthaus Wien, Zurich Tonhalle, Philharmonie de Paris, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Louis Vuitton Foundation, and the Phillips Collection in Washington.

Victor Julien-Laferrière's skills also extend to conducting. He conducts the Wiener Kammerorchester, the Orchester National d'Ile de France and the Rouen Opera Orchestra on tour as well as the Paris Chamber Orchestra. In 2021, he founded his own ensemble, the Consuelo Orchestra, which is in demand in both France and abroad.

In addition, he has recorded numerous albums. His latest recording for Alpha Classics, *Dutilleux/Dusapin* recorded with the Orchester National de France, was awarded a *Diapason* D'Or in 2023.

Victor Julien-Laferrière studied with René Benedetti, then with Roland Pidoux at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris, with Heinrich Schiff at the University of Vienna and with Clemens Hagen at the Salzburg Mozarteum in Salzburg. He also attended in the Seiji Ozawa International Music Academy in Switzerland from 2005 to 2011. He plays on a cello by Domenico Montagnana and with a bow by Dominique Peccatte.

Justin Taylor

harpsichord



© Jean-Baptiste Millot

Justin Taylor's impressive concert and recording career began in 2015 when he won First Prize at the Musica Antiqua Harpsichord Competition in Bruges, along with the Audience Prize, the Alpha Classics Prize, and the EUBO Developing Trust Prize. He is famed for his 'virtuoso, sensitive, and gourmand interpretations' (Sophie Bourdais, *Télérama*, 2021).

In 2017, he was nominated as one of three finalists in the Instrumental Soloist Revelation category of the Victoires de la Musique Classique. That same year, the Professional Critics Association awarded him the Musical Revelation of the Year Prize.

Since then, he has been invited to play in European concert halls including the Paris Philharmonie, the Auditori in Barcelona, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the DeSingel in Antwerp, the Louvre Auditorium

and the Roque d'Anthéron Festival. In Japan, his debut at the Oji Hall in Tokyo attracted much attention, and he has performed in the United States, both in New York and in Washington. Taylor has also played with orchestras such as the National Orchestra of Île-de-France, the Royal Chamber Orchestra of Wallonie, the Geneva Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of Picardie, and the Concerto Köln.

He has already made more than ten recordings, in exclusivity with Alpha Classics. His most recent album, *La Famille Rameau*, has been praised for his 'triumphant virtuosity, tender poetry, and downright miraculous touch' (*Classica*, May 2021).

Taylor's ensemble Le Consort, created with his friends, violinists Sophie de Bardonnèche and Théotime Langlois de Swarte, won the First Prize in 2017 at the Loire Valley International Early Music Competition, and was awarded the Diapason d'Or for the year 2019. Le Consort is in residency at the Singer-Polignac Foundation, the Banque de France, and Royaumont Foundation.

FUTURE CONCERTS

Friday 18 October 1pm
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NEW GENERATION ARTISTS

A selection of pieces by **John Corigliano**, **Ludwig van Beethoven**, **Franz Liszt**, and **Frédéric Chopin**

Alexander Gadjiev piano

Thursday 24 October 1pm
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BEETHOVEN DEDICATIONS

Ludwig van Beethoven
Sextet in E-flat major Op 71
Octet in E-flat major Op 103
Rondino in E-flat major

LSO Wind Ensemble

Thursday 7 November 1pm
LSO St Luke's

BEETHOVEN DEDICATIONS

Ludwig van Beethoven String Quartet No 8 in E minor, 'Razumovsky'
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart String Quartet No 3 in G major

Quatuor Modigliani

Thursday 21 November 1pm
LSO St Luke's

ORNAMENTS OF THE BAROQUE

A selection of pieces by **Johann Sebastian Bach**, **Georg Philipp Telemann**, **Francesco Barsanti**, and more.

Lucie Horsch recorder
Rachel Podger violin

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