



Bach's Gambit: Going for Galant

A streamed video performance
Available April 6 – April 20, 2021

Marc Bellassai – fortepiano
Arnie Tanimoto – bass viola da gamba

Recorded in the
Arthur & Bernice Friedland Grand Courtroom at the Allegany Museum
Cumberland, Maryland
March 17, 2021

Ryan Brenneman of Allegany Media, video recording
Mark Skinner, audio recording
Lyle Nordstrom, producer

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Program.

- from A Treatise of Good Taste in the Art of Musick (1749) Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762)
Auld Bob Morrice
- Sonata for Violin and Piano in D major op. 18 #2 Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782)
Allegretto
Rondeau: non tanto allegro
- “Scottish Songs,” HOB XXXIa Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
Young Damon
- Pieces for bass viol, Drexel Manuscript 5871 Carl Fredrich Abel (1723-1787)
[Prelude]
Adagio
Tempo di Minuet
- Scottish Songs, HOB XXXIa Haydn
Cumbernauld House
- Allegro Siciliano e Scherzando in F#min from Achtzehn Probestücke (Versuch 1753) CPE Bach:
- Scottish Songs, HOB XXXIa Haydn
Fy gar rub her oèr wi strae
- Sonata in c minor, from the Maltzan Manuscript A2:55A C. F. Abel
Moderato
Adagio
Vivace

About the Performers

Marc C. Bellassai

Marc Bellassai has studied at the Oberlin conservatory [BMus '85, Harpsichord], Indiana University [MMus '89 and Artist Diploma] and, as a Fulbright IIE scholar from 1994-6, at the Civica Scuola di Musica and Castello Sforzesco in Milan, Italy. He has studied with harpsichordists Lisa Goode Crawford, Elisabeth Wright, and Laura Alvini. His interests include early keyboard performance practice, basso continuo, organology, art history, and the music and literature of the Italian seicento/settecento. He currently teaches Harpsichord, Art History, and directs the Early Music Ensemble at Towson University. Marc also performs in Baltimore with Charm City Baroque and in New York with the Academy of Sacred Music.

Arnie Tanimoto

Gold medalist of the 7th International Bach-Abel Competition, Arnie Tanimoto is equally at home on the viola da gamba and Baroque cello. He was the first-ever viola da gamba major at The Juilliard School, where he soloed on both instruments. He also holds degrees and certificates from Oberlin Conservatory, the Eastman School of Music and the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. Described by The New York Times as a "fine instrumental soloist," Arnie performs in venues across the United States, Europe, and Japan. The recipient of a 2017 Frank Huntington Beebe Fund Fellowship he has also performed and recorded with Barthold Kuijken, the Boston Early Music Festival Ensemble, and the Smithsonian Consort of Viols. Arnie is an advocate for the viola da gamba, and can be found giving lecture demonstrations and premieres of new works for the instrument around the country.

About the Program

Johann Christian Bach, born in 1735 to Johann Sebastian and Anna Magdalena Bach, was the last in a line of 11 sons. He was most likely instructed in music by his father until the elder Bach's death in 1750. At that time Johann Christian moved in with his older half-brother, Carl Philipp Emanuel, who at that time was considered the most talented of Bach's sons. After a stint in Italy, J.C. moved to London in 1762, there premiering three of his operas, leading eventually to his appointment as "music master" to Queen Charlotte.

The next few years marked several notable events in his career. In April of 1764 the Mozart family arrived in London where the 8-year-old Wolfgang became an admirer of J.C. and engaged him as his teacher and duet performer. (Hearing of his teacher's death in 1782, Mozart commented, "What a loss to the musical world.") In 1768, Bach is credited to have performed the first London recital on the new-fangled fortepiano. In 1766, he married the soprano Cecilia Grassi.

Also in 1764 he cemented a friendship with Carl Friedrich Abel as the two began lodging at the same establishment at that time. C.F. Abel was born in 1723 in Saxon Cöthen (in present-day Germany). After his father's death in the late 1730's Abel moved to Leipzig and established a connection with the Bach family, including as a student with J.S. Bach. By 1743 he had become a member of the famous court orchestra in Dresden under Johann Adolf Hasse, one of the leading opera composers of the era. After visiting several other cities in Europe, he eventually ended up in London where he became very well known as a performer on the viola da gamba and harpsichord as well as the newly invented "pentachord," often performing his own works. Abel became a friend to the young Mozart who actually copied one of Abel's symphonies, probably as an exercise. (at one time thought to be a composition of Mozart and was given the number K18).

His collaboration with J.C. Bach began in 1763, when he was also appointed as a chamber musician to Queen Charlotte. Bach and Abel soon began their concert series, which began as part of Mrs. Cornely's entertainments at Carlisle House in Soho Square. Their success eventually garnered a partnership with G.A. Gallini, a retired dancer, on a project to build their own concert room in Hanover square. The first concert was given on 1st February 1775 which was advertised in the Public Advertiser (Monday 30th January) and the Morning Chronicle (Saturday 28th January) thusly:



“MESS. Bach and Abel take the Liberty to acquaint the Nobility and Gentry Subscribers to their CONCERTS that [details of the next concert] The Nobility and Gentry are most humbly desired to order their Coachmen to set them down ...at the door in Hanover Street with their Horses Heads towards Grosvenor Square, the Door in the Square being for Ladies [Sedan] Chairs only.”

This was to become London's premier concert venue. Its location in the heart of fashionable Mayfair, with the surrounding Georgian homes, offered many well-to-do clientele for his performances.

J.C. Bach became thoroughly anglicized and, in fact is known today as the “English Bach.” (He became known as “John Bach.”) The concert series gradually went into decline and after J.C.'s death in 1782 Abel spent several years back in Germany, returning again in 1785 becoming again an active performer in the Hanover venue. His last performance as a viol virtuoso apparently took place in 1787.

Lyle Nordstrom

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