

78TH SEASON OF

# CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART | OCTOBER 6, 2019





Jory Vinikour and Rachel Barton Pine, photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

# PROGRAM

**Rachel Barton Pine, violin**

**Jory Vinikour, harpsichord**

*Johann Sebastian Bach's Masterpieces for Violin and Harpsichord*

**October 6, 2019 | 3:30**

**West Building, West Garden Court**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Sonata no. 1 for Violin and Harpsichord in B Minor, BWV 1014

Adagio

Allegro

Andante

Allegro

Partita no. 4 in D Minor, BWV 1004

Allemande

Corrente

Sarabande

Gigue

Ciaccona

*French Overture* in B Minor, BWV 831

Overture

Courante

Gavotte I

Gavotte II

Gavotte I da capo

Passepied I

Passepied II

Passepied I da capo

Sarabande

Bourrée I

Bourrée II

Bourrée I da capo

Gigue

Echo

Sonata no. 3 for Violin and Harpsichord in E Major, BWV 1016

Adagio

Allegro

Adagio ma non tanto

Allegro

*This concert is first in a series of performances by female violinists, showcasing the brilliance and stylistic versatility of the instrument from jazz, bluegrass, and baroque to contemporary classical programs.*

# THE MUSICIANS

## **Rachel Barton Pine**

Heralded as a leading interpreter of the great classical masterworks, international concert violinist Rachel Barton Pine thrills audiences with her dazzling technique, lustrous tone, and emotional honesty. With an infectious joy in music-making and a passion for connecting historical research to performance, Pine transforms audiences' experiences of classical music. She has appeared as soloist with many of the world's most prestigious ensembles, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Netherlands Radio Kamer Filharmonie. She holds top prizes from the J.S. Bach, Queen Elizabeth, Paganini, Kreisler, Szigeti, and Montreal international competitions.

Her discography of thirty-eight recordings includes *Elgar, Bruch: Violin Concertos* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Litton conducting, and *Mozart: Complete Violin Concertos* with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Sir Neville Marriner conducting, which hit number three on the classical chart. Music from her album *Vivaldi: The Complete Viola d'Amore Concertos*, recorded with Ars Antigua on Cedille Records, may be heard in the 2019 Oscar-nominated film *The Favourite*.

In addition to touring internationally as a leading classical violin soloist, Pine has been involved with historically informed performances of early music for almost three decades. *Gramophone* has described her as "a most accomplished Baroque violinist, fully the equal of the foremost specialists." She has collaborated with such leading artists as David Douglass, Elizabeth Wright, Luc Beauséjour, Marilyn McDonald, and Gesa Kordes and has worked with groups including the Newberry Consort, Callipygian Players, and Temple of Apollo. Her baroque violin performances include the Montreal Chamber Music Festival, Marlboro Music, the Frick Collection, Seattle Early Music, and the Boston Early Music Festival. Pine performs with John Mark Rozendaal and David Schrader as the period instrument ensemble Trio Settecento.

## Jory Vinikour

In repertoire ranging from Bach and before Bach, to Poulenc and beyond, Jory Vinikour has performed as soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Rotterdam Philharmonic, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, and the Philharmonic of Radio France, among many others, and as recital soloist in series and festivals throughout much of the world. He has performed under the direction of such renowned conductors as Stéphane Denève, Martin Haselböck, Armin Jordan, and Marc Minkowski. Vinikour made his recital debut at Chicago's famed Ravinia Festival this summer and performed as a soloist at the Aspen Festival under the direction of Nicholas McGegan. In recent seasons, he has made appearances as conductor and soloist with the St. Louis Symphony, the Bergen and Hong Kong Philharmonics, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Musica Angelica, the Korea Chamber Orchestra, musicAeterna, and Juillard415.

With the Wiener Akademie, Vinikour conducted Mozart's *Bastien et Bastienne* and *Der Schauspieldirektor* for the 2019 Salzburg Mozartwoche, and he will conduct four performances of Handel's *Messiah* with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra later this year.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## **Sonata no. 1 for Violin and Harpsichord in B Minor, BWV 1014**

Johann Sebastian Bach's Six Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord, BWV 1014–1019, were likely composed during Bach's period in Köthen, between 1717 and 1723. Bach's son, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, describes these works as among the finest his father composed. The idea of juxtaposing a complete harpsichord part against the "solo" instrument was quite novel at this time, for the harpsichord possessed a tremendous solo repertoire but was used principally as a continuo instrument in ensembles. Apart from the concerti for harpsichord and strings, Bach used the harpsichord as an equal duo partner in three sonatas with viola da gamba, at least two with flute, and the six sonatas with violin.

These works, though never published in Bach's lifetime, were admired by Bach's followers, and copies circulated throughout Europe. Carl Philipp describes these works as trio sonatas, much in line with Bach's trio sonatas for organ. That is to say, the violin and the two hands of the harpsichord part each represent relatively equal polyphonic lines within this three-part framework. That said, the sonatas vary tremendously in character, and even in texture, Bach treating both instruments in a profoundly idiomatic fashion.

As a case in point, the Sonata in B Minor, BWV 1014, begins with a highly expressive Adagio. The violin's florid cantilena is accompanied by a steady, eight-note accompaniment from the harpsichord, with the right hand's two voices mostly playing thirds or sixths, although frequently forming two independent voices. When one considers that the violin is also frequently playing double stops, this brings the movement to a five-part texture. The second movement is a fairly straight-forward fugue, in a true trio sonata texture. The third movement, in D major, is a serene Andante, the violin and the right hand of the harpsichord embroidering over a steady eight-note bass line. The brilliant finale again shows the violin and the two hands of the harpsichord in a three-part contrapuntal texture.

*Program note by Jory Vinikour*

## **Partita no. 4 in D Minor, BWV 1004**

Johann Sebastian Bach's Six Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin, BWV 1001–1006, are the culmination of an almost century-old tradition of multiple-voice writing for unaccompanied violin in Germany. Works by Thomas Baltzar (Preludes and Allemande), Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (Passacaglia), Johann Paul von Westhoff (Suites), and Georg Pisendel (Sonata) serve as significant prior examples of this improvisatory and compositional practice with which Bach was intimately familiar.



Bach's autograph manuscript from Köthen is dated 1720, though some scholars believe he may have begun composing the pieces as early as 1717. The title page includes the designation "Part 1," with Part 2 being the Six Suites for unaccompanied cello (probably the "da spalla" type of violoncello played by himself).

The Sonatas and Partitas are full of technical challenges that must be overcome in order to bring out the harmonies and polyphonies. They require a highly refined technique of both the left and right hand. Clearly Bach was not only a genius composer and master keyboard player, but also a violin virtuoso of the first rank. The violin was probably the first instrument he studied with his violinist father, Johann Ambrosius.

Bach's first professional jobs in Luneberg and Weimar included significant duties as a violin player, and he continued to play the instrument for all of his life. Perhaps his esteem for the violin is reflected in the longest fugue he ever wrote, which was not for organ, harpsichord, or ensemble, but for unaccompanied violin (the Fuga of BWV 1005).

The internal symmetry of the six violin works points to Bach's conception of them as a cycle, rather than merely a collection. Each fugue in the six violin works is increasingly longer and more complex. In contrast, the third movements of the Sonatas become ever sparser, from three voices to two to primarily one. The Partitas increase in size from four movements to five to six. Their stylistic language follows a forward path, from the proto-seventeenth century of the B minor to the High Baroque Italian of the D minor, to the new modern French style of the E major.

Bach's Partitas are suites of dance movements. He follows the standard Italianate sequence of Allemande, Corrente, Sarabande, and Gigue in his D Minor Partita, but deviates from it in the last movement, substituting an intriguingly titled "Tempo di Borea." (Perhaps this was a nod to Pisenel, whose earlier Sonata had concluded with a Giga and Variation.) Despite the fact that none of these dances were meant to accompany actual dancing, Bach is often meticulous in his adherence to symmetrical phrases indicating regular step units.

The first four movements of the Partita no. 4 in D Minor could form a suite of their own, but it turns out that they are leading up to one of the pinnacles of all music. Much has been written about the work's Ciaccona as a monumental showpiece, or as a journey through the deepest of emotions. The theory that Bach wrote it as a memorial to his first wife has been convincingly debunked, but we still continue to hope that perhaps it has some hidden, poignant extra-musical meaning such as the crucifixion. (Another theory suggests that the three sonata-partita pairs may represent birth, death, and resurrection.) Yet the music need not justify itself beyond its notes and the emotions they portray. These thirty-four imaginative variations in three sections are grand, playful, peaceful, uncertain, triumphant, tragic. Yet, somehow, Bach never loses the spirit of the dance.

*Program note by Rachel Barton Pine*

### **French Overture in B Minor, BWV 831**

The so-called *French Overture*, originally titled *Overtüre nach Französischer Art* (Overture in the French style) was published in 1735, as the second work (following the *Italian Concerto*) of the second *Clavier-Übung*. These two works certainly seek to explore national styles, using the harpsichord in an orchestral fashion to emulate French and Italian traits. However, the *French Overture*, which Bach initially composed (although unpublished) in C minor, serves to complete the sequence of tonalities of the Six Partitas for Solo Harpsichord, BWV 825-830 (published from 1726–1730, as the first volume of the *Clavier-Übung*).

The first movement, from which Bach draws the heading title of the work, is indeed an overture, inspired by the early models of Jean-Baptiste Lully. In Bach's keyboard works, we find this type of movement in the Partita in D Major, BWV 828, as well as opening the second half of the *Goldberg Variations*. The first half of all of these pieces is always in duple time, with dotted rhythms. Whereas in the Partita in D Major, and the sixteenth of the *Goldberg Variations*, the effect is jubilant; here, the mood is dramatic, even tragic. This opening section is followed by an extended fugal passage in 6/8, in distinctly delineated episodes. Bach notes the changes of keyboard with *forte* (lower keyboard) and *piano* (upper). At the end of this fugue, the opening material returns, bringing this extraordinary movement to a close.

Bach skips the customary Allemande, following the Overture with an elegant Courante, strongly inspired by Francois Couperin's models. A lively Gavotte, which Bach marks *forte* alternates with a much more intimate (*piano*) Gavotte in D major. Bach writes this second Gavotte as a two-part piece, perhaps evoking a duet between oboe and bassoon. Likewise, the rather explosive first Passepied alternates with a crystalline B major trio. Even the exquisitely introspective Sarabande is written in strict four-part counterpoint. The first of the Bourrées is of a very rustic character. It alternates with a more flowing piece, also in B minor. The Gigue is very much in the mold of examples by the French composers Bach so admired, such as Couperin and Marchand. The suite concludes with an Echo—this rustic dance uses once more the contrasts of the harpsichord's two keyboards, creating the effect that the title suggests.

*Program note by Jory Vinikour*

### Sonata no. 3 for Violin and Harpsichord in E Major, BWV 1016

Sonata no. 3 for Violin and Harpsichord in E Major opens with a monumental Adagio. Over a thickly layered, choral-like accompaniment in the harpsichord, the violin soars freely in a richly ornamented line. This is followed by a merry fugue. The third movement, Adagio ma non tanto, shows the two instruments exchanging expressive tripletted figuration and chordal accompaniment. The final movement, a brilliant, concerto-like Allegro, features the violin and harpsichord exchanging brilliant, swirling, sixteenth-note figuration. The middle section of the movement juxtaposes a development of this writing with contrasting triplet material, creating an unusual “two against three” rhythmic texture.

*Program note by Jory Vinikour*



Edmond Lebel, *Still Life of Musical Instruments*, c. 1863, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Robert B. Menschel Fund, 2006.109.1

### Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Eighth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, concerts are held in the West Building, West Garden Court.

#### Brandon Ridenour with Cuatrombon and Cordeone

*Vamos Juntos*

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of John Lennon’s 1969 song “Come Together” with a diversified program of newly arranged music.

October 13, 3:30

#### Ran Dank and Soyeon Kate Lee, pianists

Piano solo and duo works, featuring music by Bach, Liszt, Enrique Granados, and Nikolai Kapustin, and a world premiere by composer Marc-André Hamelin.

October 20, 3:30

Sound Sketch

#### Jacqueline Pollauf, harp

*Lamentations, Prayers, and Meditations in Contemporary Art and Music*

East Building Library

October 25, 12:10

#### Slavic Soul Party!

*Far East Suite*

A reimagination of Duke Ellington’s *Far East Suite* with an Eastern European brass band twist!

October 27, 3:30

### General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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