

Lammermuir Festival

## Autumn Special

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Online from 14 September 2020, 8:00pm | Holy Trinity Church, Haddington

### Jonathan Manson viola da gamba Steven Devine harpsichord

**Johann Sebastian Bach** Viola da Gamba Sonata No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1027  
1. Adagio • 2. Allegro ma non tanto • 3. Andante • 4. Allegro moderato

**Marin Marais** *Pièces de viole*

*La petite bru – Air gracieux* (Book V, 1725)

*Le badinage* (Book IV, 1717)

*Chaconne* (Book V, 1725)

**Johann Sebastian Bach** Viola da Gamba Sonata No. 2 in D Major, BWV 1028  
1. Adagio • 2. Allegro • 3. Andante • 4. Allegro

**Jean-Philippe Rameau** *L'enharmonique* from Suite in G Major, RCT 6

**Johann Sebastian Bach** Viola da Gamba Sonata No. 3 in G Minor, BWV 1029  
1. Vivace • 2. Adagio • 3. Allegro

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Although **Johann Sebastian Bach** is most highly regarded for his compositional invention and daring originality, he was also something of a musical magpie. A large part of his output was the result of fusions between the different European musical styles prevalent in the first half of the eighteenth century. Bringing together the latest ideas from France and Italy with his thorough grounding in the Lutheran German tradition, Bach was able to generate works that would have sounded incredibly fresh.

There is perhaps nowhere in Bach's output where this cross-pollination is more evident than in his **three sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord**. While each of them broadly displays the influence of the French tradition on Bach's approach, he made use of Italian and German formal models that allowed their attractive melodic ideas to be extended into more elaborate musical structures.

In this programme, Jonathan and Steven explore Bach's three sonatas alongside music by **Marin Marais** and **Jean-Philippe Rameau**, two of the leading exponents of French Baroque music. Born of humble origins in Paris, Marais appears to have been something of a prodigy on the viola da gamba. He completed his studies with the renowned Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe (this relationship is reimagined in Alain Corneau's 1991 film, *Tous les matins du monde*). After coming to the attention of Jean-Baptiste Lully while playing in the opera orchestra in Paris, Marais became one of Louis XIV's royal chamber musicians. Between 1686 and 1725, he published five books of works for viol and continuo, from which the four pieces in this programme are drawn. Each of them reflects the dance styles that were popular at the French court and gives some insight into Marais' own technique. Contemporaries described his playing as being filled with 'charm and fire'; this is audible in the way his music persistently adds small details and decorations to what are essentially quite simple musical forms.

After spending the majority of his life and career in provincial France, **Jean-Philippe Rameau** only came to Paris at the age of forty. He did not have any significant operatic success until his fifties, after which he essentially reinvented the form (making for an inspirational role model, if ever there was one). While it was for his operas and his music theory that he attracted the greatest renown, he also produced a sizeable corpus of forward-looking keyboard music. *L'enharmonique* is taken from his Suite in G major from the *Nouvelles suites de pieces de clavecin* (c. 1729/30). It is a truly remarkable piece, based on so-called enharmonic equivalence — that is to say, where a sharp note becomes its flat version (for example, as B-flat becomes A-sharp), thus allowing the harmony to pivot in unanticipated directions. This was bold stuff for early eighteenth-century France. In the preface to the print, Rameau discusses the piece in some depth, attempting to defend his process, insofar as it was 'based on logic and has the sanction of Nature herself.'

It seems likely that Bach would have known at least some of Rameau's keyboard music. In each of Bach's three viola da gamba sonatas, the viol plays alongside the

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harpsichord as an obbligato instrument — i.e. the harpsichordist's right hand plays a solo part in its own right, rather than merely just accompanying the viol. The first two, the **Sonata in G Major (BWV 1027)** and the **Sonata in D Major (BWV 1028)** are examples of the seventeenth-century Italian *sonata da chiesa* ("church sonata") model, with their two pairs of slow–fast movements. By contrast, the third — the **Sonata in G Minor (BWV 1029)** — demonstrates the *Sonate auf Concertenart*. This German form arose in response to the popularity of concertos by Italian composers such as Antonio Vivaldi.

While there has been some speculation the sonatas date from early in Bach's career, it now seems most likely that the first two sonatas date from around 1742. The fair copy of the **Sonata in G Major** was written in Bach's own hand on the same type of paper used for two new viol parts for the *Matthew Passion*. Although there is no firm evidence, it seems possible that the pieces (and parts) were made for the celebrated viol player Carl Friedrich Abel. Abel lived in Leipzig from the late 1730s into the 1740s, and his father (also a viol player) was employed at the Cöthen court during Bach's time there (1717–1723).

The musical basis of the **Sonata in G Major** is an earlier sonata for two flutes and continuo (BWV 1039), which probably dates from Bach's first years in Leipzig (c.1723–1726) — but scholars have suggested that both sonatas were, in fact, reworkings of an even earlier, now-lost sonata for two violins and continuo.

The **D major sonata (BWV 1028)** demonstrates Bach's fluency with the so-called *galant* style popular at the time, which was primarily concerned with attractive melodicism rather than the older-fashioned Bachian counterpoint. In this sonata, Bach proved himself more than capable of keeping up with the fashion. However, there are a few points where he evidently couldn't help himself, inserting short quasi-fugal sections, as the three parts closely imitating one another (there is actually a strict canon for five bars near the opening of the first movement; see if you can hear it).

As alluded to above, the **Sonata in G Minor (BWV 1029)** follows a different form, being a sonata in the concerto style. The main theme of the opening *Vivace* almost sounds like a minor-mode version of the opening movement of *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3*. And with only the two instruments at his disposal, Bach somehow creates an orchestral soundworld, with a series of eloquent exchanges between the multiple voices distributed between the viol and harpsichord. The central *Adagio* resembles the plangent French *tombeaux* of Saint-Colombe and Marais (which Bach also emulated particularly effectively in his passion arias *Komm, süßes Kreuz* and *Es ist vollbracht*). However, the concluding *Allegro* quickly returns to a more worldly spirit, its dancing theme invoking a palpable sense of irrepressible visceral energy, which persists even through Bach's occasional contrapuntal detours

David Lee

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**Jonathan Manson** enjoys a busy and varied career as a performer on both cello and viola da gamba. Born in Edinburgh to a musical family, he received his formative training at the International Cello Centre under the direction of Jane Cowan, later going on to study with Steven Doane and Christel Thielmann at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. A growing fascination for early music led him to Holland, where he studied viola da gamba with Wieland Kuijken at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague.

For ten years he was the principal cellist of the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, with whom he performed and recorded more than 150 Bach cantatas and, together with Yo-Yo Ma, Vivaldi's Concerto for two cellos. Nowadays Jonathan devotes most of his time to chamber music, performing repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to the Romantic. He is a founding member of the viol consort Phantasm, which has toured worldwide and made more than twenty recordings; several of these have won major prizes, including Gramophone Awards in 1997, 2004 and 2017. Jonathan is also the cellist of the London Haydn Quartet, whose latest volume of Haydn's complete quartets (op. 64) has just been released on the Hyperion label. Highlights of their last seasons included tours to Australia, Japan, Canada and the USA.

A long-standing partnership with the harpsichordist Trevor Pinnock has led to critically acclaimed recordings of the Bach sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord, and, together with Rachel Podger, Rameau's *Pièces de clavecin en concert*. In recent years Jonathan and Trevor have joined forces with flautist Emmanuel Pahud and violinists Matthew Truscott and Sophie Gent, leading to two best-selling recordings of Bach and tours of Europe, the USA and the Far East.

Jonathan frequently appears as a principal and continuo player with Dunedin Consort, Arcangelo, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and other leading early music groups. Recent highlights have included recitals with Elizabeth Kenny, Carolyn Sampson, Iestyn Davies, Peter Whelan and Laurence Cummings, being invited to play the solo viol part in George Benjamin's opera *Written on Skin* at the Royal Opera House, and an appearance as viola da gamba soloist with the Vienna Philharmonic. As a concerto soloist he has appeared at the Wigmore Hall and the South Bank Centre, as well as further afield, in Hong Kong, Potsdam, the Haydn Festspiele in Eisenstadt and New York's Carnegie Hall.

Equally passionate about teaching, Jonathan has been professor for Baroque cello and viola da gamba at the Royal Academy of Music in London since 2003, and he is a regular guest at the Guildhall School of Music, the Royal College of Music, Trinity Laban Conservatoire, Birmingham Conservatoire and the Royal Welsh College. He has also been invited to teach on numerous courses around the world, including those in Germany, Israel, Hong Kong, Portugal, Iceland and the USA, as well as closer to home, at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Jonathan lives in Oxfordshire with his wife and young daughter, and their golden retriever.

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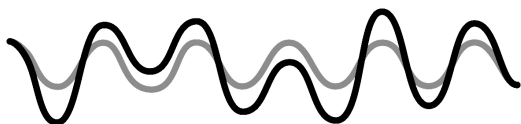
**Steven Devine** enjoys a busy career as a music director and keyboard player working with some of the finest musicians.

He is the Principal Keyboard Player with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and also the principal keyboard player for The Gonzaga Band, Classical Opera (The Mozartists) and performs regularly with many other groups around Europe. He has recorded over thirty discs with other artists and ensembles and made six solo recordings. His recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations (Chandos Records) has been received critical acclaim – including *Gramophone* magazine describing it as 'among the best'. The complete harpsichord works of Rameau (Resonus) has received five-star reviews from *BBC Music Magazine* and Steven's latest recording of Bach's Italian Concerto has been voted *Classic FM's* Connoisseur's choice. Steven has recently released Book 1 of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* ('it's the one of all I've heard in the past ten years that I am happiest to live with.' *Early Music Review*) with Book 2 being released at the start of 2020.

He made his London conducting debut in 2002 at the Royal Albert Hall and is now a regular performer there – including making his Proms directing debut in August 2007 with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He has conducted the Mozart Festival Orchestra in every major concert hall in the UK and also across Switzerland. Steven is Music Director for New Chamber Opera in Oxford and with them has performed repertoire from Cavalli to Rossini. For the Dartington Festival Opera he has conducted Handel's *Orlando* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. He is currently conductor and Artistic Advisor for the English Haydn Festival in Bridgnorth.

Steven works regularly with the Norwegian Wind Ensemble, Trondheim Barokk, the Victoria Baroque Players (BC, Canada) and Arion Baroque Ensemble (Montreal).

He teaches harpsichord and fortepiano at Trinity Laban Conservatoire in London and is Early Keyboard Consultant to the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Royal Welsh Colleges. Finally, Steven is thrilled to be a member of the ground-breaking Art of Moog: an electronic music group specialising in the performance of Bach.



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David Lee