



2024 Bach to You Winter Program



WASHINGTON BACH CONSORT
Dana Marsh, Artistic Director

Bach to You

Winter Program 2024

Two airs from Come, Ye Sons of Art (Henry Purcell, 1694)
Strike the Viol
Bid the Virtues

Prelude in G minor (Robert de Visée, 1699)

Suite No. 3 from Tibiades (Chauvon, 1717)
Prelude: *Tendrement*
Allemande: *la Dragonne*
Sarabande: *la Melancolique*
Courante: *la Moissette*
Sicilienne: *la Fileuse*
Le Rouët: *Légèrement*

Pan et Syrinx (Montéclair, 1706)

*Fairy Queen Suite Z.629 (Purcell, 1692)
Hornpipe
Dance of the Fairies
Rondeau
If Love's a Sweet Passion
Now the Night is Chas'd Away

Featuring
Margot Rood, *soprano*
Jessica Powell Eig, *viola da gamba*
Margaret Brown Owens, *oboe*
William Simms, *lute*

*order of movements TBD

HENRY PURCELL (1659–1695)

Excerpts from “Come Ye Sons of Art” Z.323

Excerpts from “The Fairy-Queen” Z.629

Purcell was remarkably prolific considering his short life, and he is considered the greatest English composer of the Baroque era. He was born in 1659, son of Henry Purcell senior, the Master of Choristers at Westminster Abbey. At his father’s death in 1664, Purcell’s uncle Thomas assumed his guardianship and supported Purcell’s musical studies and early career. Having begun his music studies early, Purcell was already a virtuoso keyboard artist in his teens. There followed a series of prestigious royal appointments: assistant royal instrument keeper (1673); composer-in-ordinary for the violins—referring to a permanent member of the royal music staff—(1677); organist at Westminster Abbey—succeeding John Blow (1679); organist at the Chapel Royal (1682); royal instrument keeper (1683); and court harpsichordist (1685).

While Purcell wrote instrumental music, especially in his early years, he is best known for the many larger scale works (e.g., odes, anthems and cantatas) that he wrote for the church, for royal occasions, and for the theater. Undoubtedly his best-known composition is the opera, “Dido and Aeneas,” which was very successful when presented in 1689. He then collaborated with poet John Dryden to produce “King Arthur,” referred to as a “semi-opera,” a Restoration form in which most of the main characters spoke their lines rather than singing them, the musical sections being performed by subsidiary characters in the drama. He wrote the music for a 1692 revival of “Oedipus,” by Dryden, and for “The Fairy-Queen” (see below) in the same year. His final work for the stage, “The Indian Queen,” was unfinished at the time of his death on November 21, 1695. Purcell’s brother, Daniel, completed the music.

Purcell’s death in 1695 came at the height of his career. The cause of death, possibly tuberculosis, has been a matter of speculation. He is interred in Westminster Abbey next to the organ. His epitaph reads: “Here lyes Henry Purcell Esq., who left this life and is gone to that Blessed Place where only His harmony can be exceeded.” Purcell’s wife Frances died in 1706, having arranged to publish a number of her husband’s works, including a compendium of his songs, under the title *Orpheus Britannicus*, a fitting tribute.

This “Bach to You” program begins with two short excerpts from Purcell’s “**Come Ye Sons of Art**,” sometimes known “Ode for Queen Mary’s Birthday.” Purcell composed six birthday odes in honor of Queen Mary II, and this was the last. It was first performed in April 1694, and the Queen died of smallpox in December of the same year at the age of 32. The libretto for the ode has been attributed (not unanimously) to Nahum Tate, who was Poet Laureate of England at the time the Ode was written. He was also the librettist for Purcell’s “Dido and Aeneas.” The full libretto follows, with the excerpts performed in the Bach to You program shown in **bold type**:

Come, ye Sons of Art, come away,
Tune all your voices and instruments play
To celebrate this triumphant day.
Sound the trumpet till around
You make the listening shores rebound.
On the sprightly oboe play.
All the instruments of joy
That skilful numbers can employ
To celebrate the glory of this day

**Strike the Viol, touch the Lute;
Wake the Harp, inspire the Flute:
Sing your Patronesse's Praise,
Sing, in cheerful and harmonious Lays.**

The day that such a blessing gave
No common festival should be.
What it justly seem'd to crave,
Grant, o grant, and let it have
The honour of a Jubilee.

**Bid the Virtues, bid the Graces
To the sacred shrine repair,
Round the altar take their places,
Blessing with returns of pray'r
Their great Defender's care
While Maria's royal zeal
Best instructs you how to pray
Hourly from her own
Conversing with th'Eternal Throne.**

These are the sacred charms that shield
Her daring hero in the field;
Thus she supports his righteous cause,
Thus to aid his immortal pow'r she draws

See Nature, rejoicing, has shown us the way,
With innocent revels to welcome the day.
The tuneful grove, and talking rill,
The laughing vale, the replying hill,
With charming harmony unite,
The happy season to invite.

What the Graces require,
And the Muses inspire,
Is at once our delight and our duty to pay.
Thus Nature, rejoicing, has shown us the way,
With innocent revels to welcome the day.

The second Purcell composition on the program is from “**The Fairy-Queen**,” a semi-opera adaptation of Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.” The semi-opera was something in between an opera and a play. In this work the anonymous playwright took some liberties with the actual text of the original play, and the music itself had little to do with the themes of the work. It was more in the form of musical interludes (“masques”) that provided an opportunity for entertaining music and dance. Enough of the original Shakespeare remained so that audiences would have recognized the story and its origin. The original 1692 semi-opera was quite lavishly produced and very well received. It was quite long - comprising five acts plus incidental music performed while the audience members took their seats and between acts. The program selections provide a taste of the typical components of this semi-opera.

Hornpipe – A short, lively dance form played as the audience entered and was seated
Dance for the Fairies - A part of the masque for the character Bottom in Act III
Rondeau – A dance form played after the Hornpipe as the audience was seated
If Love’s a Sweet Passion – A part of the masque for the character Bottom in Act III
Now the Night is Chas’d Away – A part of the masque for Oberon and Titania in Act IV

ROBERT DE VISEE (c. 1655–c. 1732)

Prelude in G Minor

Robert de Visee is generally recognized as the foremost French baroque composer for lute, theorbo and guitar. Although a sizeable body of work has been preserved, the details of his life have not. We know that he both performed and composed for the courts of Louis XIV and Louis XV and was appointed “Maitre de Guitare du Roi” by Louis XV in 1719. He published his compositions for guitar in two books of suites in 1682 and 1686. The very short prelude included in the Bach to You program is from a collection of Robert de Visee’s compositions for lute and theorbo that was compiled by a 17th century amateur, Jean-Etienne Vaudry (1668 – 1742). This important collection includes works for lute and theorbo by the foremost composers of the period for those instruments and has come to be known as the “Vaudry de Saizenay Manuscript.”

FRANCOIS CHAUVON (?–1740)

Suite No. 3 from “Tibiades”

Not much is known about the life of Francois Chauvon other than that he worked in Paris, was active between 1710 and his death in 1740, and was a student of French composer and organist, Francois Couperin. The word “Tibiades” appears to have been made up by Chauvon from the word for “tibia” which in turn suggests the ancient Greek bone flute. The Chauvon composition that the WBC has chosen for its “Bach to You” program is an instrumental dance suite composed in 1717. The suite features oboe and recorder solos plus continuo and comprises the following parts:

Prelude: *Tendrement*

Allemande: *la Dragonne*

Sarabande: *la Melancolique*

Courante: *la Moissette*

Sicilienne: *la Fileuse*

Le Rouët: *Légèrement*

MICHEL PIGNOLET DE MONTECLAIR (1667–1737)

Pan et Syrinx

Michel Pignolet was born near Paris in 1667 and years later added the “de Montclair” to signify his status as an up-and-coming composer and teacher. He joined the orchestra of the Paris Opera at age twenty and continued playing with the orchestra until shortly before his death. He played double bass, an instrument that he is credited with introducing to the orchestra after a visit to Italy with his patron, the Prince de Vaudemont. Montclair was in demand as a teacher (among his students were the daughters of Francois Couperin), and he wrote several books of music pedagogy. While not a prolific composer, he is known to have composed two operas, serenades, concertos, and a number of cantatas .

Included in the “Bach to You” program is one such cantata, Pan et Syrinx, a setting of the myth as retold in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Syrinx, a woodland naiad devoted to Diana and to the preservation of her chastity, found herself pursued by Pan, who fell in love with her at first sight. She fled to the river Ladon where, blocked at the water’s edge, she called upon the river nymphs to transform her. Just as she fell into Pan’s lascivious embrace, she was transformed into a bundle of marsh reeds. Pan’s disappointment was lessened when he heard the sound that was made by air flowing over the reeds. Cutting the reeds into different lengths and binding them together, Pan could still hold Syrinx in his hands. The English translation of the cantata follows:

Recitative

Syrinx’s charms shone brightly

In verdant Arcadia,
But she was wasting
The best days of her life;
She was young but had no lover.

Air
Ephemeral beauty
Is wasted without love.
Venus reserves her pleasures
For the appropriate age.
The laughter of youth
Pays homage to love,
And it's from tenderness
That our best days are born.
Ephemeral beauty . . .

Recitative
Syrinx flees the chains of love,
She embraces the chaste laws of Diana:
At night she is often to be found in wild places pursuing
The creatures of the forest.

Air
Cease to pursue untameable monsters,
Strike blows that are more tender and more sure.
The blows inflicted by your hands
Are not the most redoutable.

Symphony

Recitative
Dawn already throws its golden light on the mountaintops,
The Nymph arms herself with a quiver.
She gathers her faithful companions
And rouses them with her voice.

Air
The Goddess calls you
The horn sounds, let us muster
And bring down even
The most rebellious monster.
Let the deadly arrow fly
And pierce at the same time.

Gods! Let Syrinx be proud of
This great triumph.
The Goddess . . .

Recitative

Syrinx roamed through Erymanthus.
Pan glimpses her, desires and pursues her.
The foaming waves of an impetuous river
Soon stop the fleeing Nymph in her tracks.
Her cries pierce the air
“Help me,” she shouts,
“Chaste Gods of the waters.”
Heavens! what a miracle!
Pan thinks he is about to embrace his cruel prey.
But he only grasps some reeds.
He groans and laments;
And the reeds give him an answer;
He blows his sighs into them -
Gods, with his sighs, what regrets are mingled!
One would say that Syrinx wants to indulge his desires.

Air

Pathetic remnants of my beloved
Hapless echos of my impotent cries,
It is through you that Syrinx can still talk to me.
Conserve forever these tender sounds.
Let the amiable tones which you produce
Give rise to love's best flames.
Let the shepherdess become more tender
And the shepherd more contented.
Pathetic remnants . . .

Air

Love, you possess only charms.
He is happy who follows your laws.
Syrinx will give you weapons,
You will triumph in the forests.
There you cause no pain.
You awaken all desires,
And the lover only accepts her chains
From the hand of pleasure herself.
Love, you possess . . .

Musicians



Margot Rood, hailed for her “sterling, gleaming tone and magnificent control” by The Washington Post, performs a wide range of repertoire. 2023/2024 concert performances include return appearances with Washington Bach Consort, Blue Heron, Handel & Haydn Society, and Seraphic Fire. Recent solo appearances include those with Toronto’s Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra (Messiah), Edinburgh’s Dunedin Consort (St. Matthew Passion), Cleveland Orchestra (Stravinsky Threni), Boston Symphony (Benjamin Dream of the Song), Rhode Island Philharmonic (Messiah), Philharmonia Baroque (BWV 61 & 140), New Jersey Symphony (Messiah), Charlotte Symphony Orchestra (Mozart Requiem).

Margot’s upcoming operatic performances include the title roles in Handel’s Esther and in Mouret’s Les Fêtes de Thalie with Opera Lafayette, with which she stepped in to sing the title roles in the world premiere of Rameau’s Io and the modern premiere of Pierre de La Garde’s Léandre et Héro at the close of the 2022/2023 season.

Notable recordings include Blue Heron’s Ockeghem Songs, Vol. 1 as well as Blue Heron’s world premiere recording of Cipriano de Rore’s 5-voice madrigals. Margot recorded the role of La Paix in Charpentier’s Les Arts Florissants with Boston Early Music Festival (CPO), and the role of Emily Webb on Monadnock Music’s recording of Ned Rorem’s Our Town (New World Records). She has recorded repertoire from the medieval to the 21st-century with Coro, Albany Records, Blue Heron, BMOP Sound, Toccata Classics, and Sono Luminus. Her solo recording of art songs by composer Heather Gilligan, Living in Light, is available from Albany Records.



Praised for her “natural expressiveness,” **Dr. Jessica Powell Eig** has crafted a dynamic and varied career performing on double bass, violone, and viola da gamba, working with Washington Bach Consort, American Bach Soloists, ARTEK, The Thirteen, Inscape/Urban Arias, Opera Lafayette, Washington National Cathedral Orchestra, Washington Concert Opera, New Orchestra of Washington, National Philharmonic, and many others. In 2022, she was appointed Adjunct Faculty in Classical Double Bass at George Mason University. She serves on the faculty of the Chamber Music Conference and Composers’ Forum of the East, and she is a regular guest

lecturer in double bass pedagogy at the University of Maryland. In 2010, Jessica completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in double bass performance at SUNY-Stony Brook as a student of Joseph Carver and Kurt Muroki. She received her earlier training at Cincinnati College-Conservatory, the Eastman School of Music, and The Juilliard School. After completing her DMA, Jessica pursued further private study in historical bass with Rob Nairn. She studied viola da gamba with Christel Thielmann, James Lambert, and Martha McGaughey.



In demand throughout North America as a performer and teacher on historical oboes, **Margaret Owens** is a founding member of the chamber music group Kleine Kammermusik, whose 2017 album *Fanfare and Filigree (Acis)* has received critical acclaim. She is a featured soloist with Ensemble Sprezzatura, whose debut recording *Altissima* (Chandos) was released this year. She is on faculty in the historical performance institutes of Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music and the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. At both institutions, her work centers around broadening the study of historical oboes, from playing the instruments to exploring the performance practices specific to the 18th century. Ms. Owens

earned degrees in oboe performance at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the Manhattan School of Music, and the City University of New York, where her doctoral work focused on the oboe bands and their role in the entertainments at Louis XIV's court, and led to further exploration and expertise in the French Baroque masquerade.

An eastern North Carolina native, living with her music historian husband and computer enthusiast son in Northern Virginia, Ms. Owens is an active participant in the musical life of the Washington, DC area, playing oboe with the area's period instrument orchestras. She has seen much of the United States and Canada in her travels to play with groups spanning the coasts. Summers see her onstage at the Charlotte Bach Festival, the Staunton Music Festival, and teaching at the Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute and Amherst Early Music Festival.



William Simms is an active performer of early music. Equally adept on lute, theorbo and baroque guitar, he appears regularly with The Bach Sinfonia, Apollo's Fire, The Washington Bach Consort, and The Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado. He has performed numerous operas, cantatas, and oratorios with such ensembles as The Washington National Opera, The Cleveland Opera, Opera Lafayette, and American Opera Theatre. Venues include The National Cathedral, The Museum of Fine Arts Boston, The Library of Congress, The Corcoran Gallery, The Kennedy Center and The Barns at Wolftrap. He has

toured and recorded with The Baltimore Consort as well as with Apollo's Fire. His recording with Ronn McFarlane, *Two Lutes*, was the CD pick of the week on WETA in Washington DC in 2012. Mr. Simms received a Bachelor of Music from The College of Wooster and a Master of Music from Peabody Conservatory. He serves on the faculties of Mount St. Mary's University and Hood College, and is the founder and director of the Hood Early Music Ensemble. He has recorded for the Dorian, Centaur, Naxos and Eclترا labels.

Washington Bach Consort Mission

Founded in 1977 by Dr. J. Reilly Lewis and now led by Artistic Director Dana Marsh, the Washington Bach Consort shares the transformative power of music, with the works of J.S. Bach and other baroque composers at the core. Our professional artists inspire audiences with the highest levels of artistic excellence, enrich the cultural life through historically-informed performances, and provide educational programs in the Washington, DC community and beyond.

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