

Guts Baroque Duo presents:
Finding a Voice:
From the Streets of Venice to the Courts of France

Saturday, December 9, 2017, 7:30 p.m.
Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick, Maine



featuring:

Sylvia Schwartz, violin
John Ott, viola da gamba

Finding a Voice

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Program

- La Gardana, symfonia per un violino o cornetto solo.....Biagio Marini (1594-1663)
- Sonata Prima à sopran solo.....Dario Castello (fl. 1621-1629)
- Sonata Terza à violino solo.....Giovanni Battista Fontana (1589-1630)
- Sonata Quarta à violino solo detta la Hortensia virtuosa.....Marco Uccellini (1603-1680)
- Sonata Prima “La Stella”.....Giovanni Antonio Pandolfi Mealli (fl. 1660-1669)
- Sinfonia 3 a voce sola.....Alessandro Stradella (1639-1682)
- Sonata quarta.....Johann Heinrich Schmelzer (c. 1623-1680)
- Ciaccona à violino solo.....Antonio Bertali (1605-1669)

Intermission

- Sonata 1.....Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729)
- Sonate a la Maresienne.....Marin Marais (1656-1728)

Fin

Program Notes

Biagio Marini (1594-1663) was born in Brescia to a musical family. In 1615, he gained a position as a violinist in the orchestra at the Basilica San Marco in Venice, under Claudio Monteverdi. Soon after his acclaim as a violinist and composer gained him court appointments all over Italy and as far north as Düsseldorf. During all this time he composed many volumes of vocal and instrumental music, which were published in Venice. His instrumental music is particularly noteworthy, as his work helped form the solo and trio sonata genres that would pervade the Baroque period.

His op. 1 collection *Affetti Musicali*, published in 1617, contains music written for various instruments and continuo, including the first pieces for one violin and continuo, *La Ponte*, *La Gardana* and *La Orlandina*. They are called *Sinfonias* by Marini but they set the groundwork for the genre of solo sonatas. *La Gardana* (the Garden), though it has only one section, shows off the violin's ability to play fast notes and divisions.

Dario Castello (fl. 1621-1629) is only known from two volumes of instrumental music, *Sonate Concertate* books 1 and 2, published in Venice in 1621 and 1629, and from the little information on the title pages of the original and 1641 reprint of these collections. According to the title pages, he played a wind instrument, led a company of *piffari*, the Venetian equivalent of a marching band, and by 1641 played at San Marco. There is no record of his employment at San Marco, so that may be hyperbole on the part of the publisher. Despite his current obscurity, his two collections of music sold very well, and were widely distributed throughout Europe. Castello did not publish any music after 1629, and it is speculated that he may have perished in the black plague outbreak in 1630-31.

Sonate Concertate book 1 contains the first two datable solo instrumental sonatas ever published. Written for unspecified solo instrument, these sonatas feature multiple sections with changing tempo and meter, shaping the way Italianate sonatas would be composed for a century. Tonight's program features the first of the two, *Sonata Prima*, in A minor.

Giovanni Battista Fontana (1589-1630) is only known from a few documents and a 1641 posthumous publication of his music, *Sonate a 1. 2. 3. per il violino, o cornetto, fagotto chitarone, violoncino o simile altro instromento*. From this we know he was born in Brescia, and worked as a violinist in Venice, Rome and Padua. Unfortunately, he died in the black plague outbreak of 1630-31.

His published collection is made up largely of solo violin sonatas, one of the first such collections. Tonight's program features the third such sonata. It opens with the *canzona* rhythm, a rhythm pattern common at the beginning of many vocal and instrumental works

dating back to the Renaissance. The violin writing is very virtuosic, exploring the violin's ability to play divisions, runs of very fast notes connecting the notes of a melody.

Marco Uccellini (1603-1680) studied in Assisi, likely with Giovanni Battista Buonamente, one of the great violin masters of the time. In 1641 he was employed by the Este court in Modena, where he became a close confidant of the d'Este family. He stayed there until 1665, when he gained a similar position in the court in Padua. While there he composed several operas, ballets and vocal works, but they are all lost to history. His collections of instrumental music survive, as they were published and distributed widely.

His violin sonatas were very innovative, stretching the range of the violin to the upper positions and featuring rapid passagios. Another development is that each new section finishes before the next begins, creating the feel of a multi-movement work. Tonight's program features the fourth sonata of his op. 4 collection *Sonate, Arie, Correnti*. This sonata is subtitled *detta Hortensia virtuosa*, possibly referring to the skilled Roman orator from the first century B.C., who passionately argued that women should not be taxed if they are not allowed to hold public office.

Giovanni Antonio Pandolfi Mealli (fl. 1660-1669) was a Tuscan violinist employed by Archduke Ferdinand of Austria in the 1660's, where he published at least three collections of instrumental music. Since the first two are labeled Opera 3 and 4, it can be assumed that at least two prior collections were published. However, his career in Vienna came to an end when he murdered a singer, Giovanni Marquett, during an argument. He fled to Spain, and all subsequent record of him is lost.

La Stella (the star) is the first sonata in his op. 3 collection from 1660, the oldest that survives. Similar to Uccellini's, his sonata utilizes the higher positions and greater virtuosity that was developing in the violinists of Italy.

Alessandro Stradella (1639-1682) was born to a noble family, and his father was a member of a chivalric order, the Cavalieri di San Stefano. After his father's death he moved to Rome and served as a page in the Lante palace in Rome, where he also started composing. His music was popular and well-received, but legal troubles led him to flee Rome for Venice in 1677. He quickly became mixed up in scandal again, leaving Venice with the mistress of his powerful patron, Alvise Contarini. He survived one assassination attempt by Contarini's henchmen, then left for Genoa, where he continued both to compose and to become involved in scandal. In 1682 he was stabbed to death, though the cause is unclear.

Stradella's music is primarily vocal, including several operas and oratorios, sacred and secular cantatas and smaller works, but he did compose 12 Sinfonie for Violin and Basso Continuo, never published but preserved in manuscript, many of which have obbligato basso parts

written for a cello or other bowed bass. Tonight's program features the third of this collection, in e minor.

Johann Heinrich Schmelzer (c. 1620-1680) was born in Scheibbs, Lower Austria. He spent his life working for the Hapsburg courts in Vienna and Prague, as a violinist and composer under the tutelage of Antonio Bertali. He attained a close relationship with Emperor Leopold I, who gave him a title and the position of Kapellmeister in 1679. Schmelzer was the first native Austrian to attain this position. Unfortunately he died the following year in an outbreak of the bubonic plague.

Schmelzer was a significant composer of instrumental music in Austria. His compositions developed both the Suite and the Sonata forms of 17th-century German and Austrian music. Though he is mostly known for trio sonatas, he wrote six *Sonatae unarum fidium* in 1664 for violin and continuo. Tonight's program includes the fourth sonata from this set, in D major. Typical of the 17th-century sonata, it features a number of contrasting sections. Several different dance forms and a freer fantasia section are united by a repeating stepwise ground bass line.

Antonio Bertali (1605-1669) was born in Verona, where he was trained in violin from Stefano Bernardi. In 1622 he was granted a position as a violinist in the Hapsburg court in Vienna, where he stayed for the rest of his life. Besides playing the violin, he was frequently called on to compose, and in 1649 became *maestro di cappella*. During his time there he oversaw the next generation of developing violinists in Austria, including Johann Heinrich Schmelzer.

Though he is most famous for his vocal music, which served as a model for later composers, Bertali composed one undated Ciaccona for solo violin and basso continuo. Using the popular ground bass pattern of the chaconne, he wrote a set of variations exploring different rhythms, technique, ranges, and even cross-relations between major and minor keys. As the original is quite long, tonight's performance will feature an edited version.

Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729) was born to the Jacquet family, a famous family of musicians. By the age of 5 she was adopted into the household of Madame de Montespan, Louis XIV's most famous mistress, and sang and played harpsichord for the court until 1684, when she left the court to marry the organist Marin de la Guerre. She was given the Royal Privilege to compose and publish music, a rare honor in France, and was the first French woman to compose operas. She also published two volumes of cantatas, two volumes of keyboard music and a book of trio sonatas. Her works are revolutionary and forward-thinking, combining the Italian styles of her teachers with the tastes of the French high Baroque.

Her six violin sonatas were published along with her second volume of keyboard pieces, in 1707. They are some of the earliest and most celebrated French violin sonatas. They are composed in the Italian style, with many movements strung together with contrasting tempo,

rather than in the French suite of dances that was popular at the time. Sonata 1 is in D minor, though it freely changes from minor to major between movements.

Marin Marais (1656-1728) was a gifted virtuoso on the viola da gamba, and one of the most important composers of the French Baroque era. He studied viola da gamba with Jean de Sainte-Colombe, and by age 19 he was playing with the Opera orchestra in Paris under Jean-Baptiste Lully. He soon started composing, under the tutelage of Lully, and was appointed as a royal chamber musician to Louis XIV. By 1690 he also conducted and composed for the Opera, a post he inherited after the premature death of Lully. Marais had a great reputation as a teacher, and many of the next generation of viol players, such as Charles Dollé, Louis de Caix-d'Hervelois, Jacques Morel, and Marais's son Roland are believed to have studied with him.

Sonate à la Marlesienne comes from the collection *La Gamme et Autres Morceaux de Symphonie*, for violin, viol and harpsichord, published in 1723. It is written as a suite of dances and character pieces, alternating between slow and fast movements.

About Historically-Informed Performance Practice

Part of the mission of Guts is to bring the music of the Baroque era to vivid life, recreating the distinct sound of the time in which it was composed. In tonight's program, Sylvia will be playing a baroque violin, constructed in 2016 by Douglas Cox to replicate a Guarneri violin of the early 1700's, with a short baroque bow made by David Hawthorne and a long baroque bow made by Louis Bégin. John will play a viola da gamba constructed by Marco Ternovec to the size of early 18th century instruments, with a baroque bow made by Chris English. Both instruments are strung with pure-gut strings, the way they would have been in the 18th century. Gut strings sound warmer, though quieter, than their modern metal equivalents, and baroque instruments are under less tension, so they sound more open, though not as projecting. Like most Baroque music, all of the music on tonight's program has a basso continuo line forming the foundation of the ensemble, shared by the cello or gamba and the keyboard, usually a harpsichord or organ. We are presenting these works without a keyboard instrument for this concert.

As performers, we will be adding ornaments such as trills and turns to the music as we play. The practice of decorating music was unique to the performer, and helped each musician put their own stamp on a piece of music. Decorating this way both adds to the expressiveness of the music and allows us to share our personalities as performers with our audience. Also, since the music is imitating sung text, even though the music we are playing has no specific text we will be shaping our phrases and melodies as if they were sung with words.

Guts: About Us

Fascinated and deeply inspired by the relationship between music, movement, and dance, violinist and Dalcrozian-in-training **Sylvia Schwartz** is a passionate chamber musician in both modern and historical performance practices. A native of Boston, Sylvia has performed with L'Esprit Baroque, Eudaimonia, Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra, Harvard Early Music Society, New Bedford Symphony, New England Classical Singers, Eudaimonia, Lizzie and the Flakjackets, and the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras throughout California and New England, in Ontario, Estonia, Latvia, and at Shostakovich Hall in St. Petersburg, Russia. Sylvia holds a M.M. in Violin Performance from the Longy School of Music, where she studied violin with Laura Bossert and early music with Dana Maiben, Na'ama Lion, Vivian Montgomery, and Ryan Turner. She also holds a B.S. in Engineering from Olin College. Sylvia is on faculty at Vienna Music Institute in Irvine, California.

Cellist and gambist **John Ott**, a native of Los Angeles, received his Bachelor of Music degree in cello performance from UC Irvine in 2004, studying with Dr. Margaret Parkins, and in 2016 completed his Master of Music degree in Early Music, viola da gamba at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he studied with Jane Hershey. In between, he performed with Symphony Irvine, Dana Point Symphony, Montage Civic Orchestra, and South Orange County Chamber Orchestra, played in the string quartet Elegie Quartet, and played chamber music all over Los Angeles and Orange County. He also maintains a large teaching studio, primarily at Vienna Music Institute in Irvine. During his two years in Massachusetts, aside from his Longy ensembles, he performed with Boston Camerata and Boston Opera Collaborative. He started playing with the chamber ensemble L'Esprit Baroque in 2014.

Keep in touch...

For more information about upcoming concerts, recordings, and special projects, please visit us at www.gutsbaroque.com.

On the home page is a red button to sign up for our **email list**, which we warmly welcome you to do!

Acknowledgements

Thank you so much to Priscilla Bolte and Ward Bein for hosting us and making the arrangements for this concert.

John Ott will be playing this concert on a beautiful Ternovec viol, graciously on loan for the week from his teacher, Jane Hershey.

Sylvia Schwartz plays a 2016 Guarneri-model baroque violin on generous short-term loan from the maker, Douglas Cox.

She is currently raising funds to purchase the instrument, and is deeply grateful to the following people who have contributed toward raising 10% of the total cost as of December 8:

Piccolo Patron (\$5-9)

Jared W

E Pluribus Unum (\$10-24)

Shira Koffman

Supporter (\$25-99)

Anonymous

Barbara Apigian

Marian Bremer

Andrea Itkin

Elysha Massatt

Carole Schachter

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and Dave Colt

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Laura Bossert

Elizabeth Bouve

Mary & Jeff Fuhrer

Ed and Marti Itkin

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Richard and Hildy Itkin

Steve Itkin

Judith S Karp

Kevin Sihlanick

Deirdre Strachan

Patron (\$500+)

Denise and Samuel

Schwartz

If you would like to contribute, please leave a donation with us tonight, fill out a pledge form, or visit our fundraising page at:

<https://www.gofundme.com/finding-a-voicea-violin-for-sylvia>

