

Guts Baroque Duo presents:
J.S. Bach:
Alone and Together

Sunday, June 28, 2020, 4:00 P.M. PDT/7:00 P.M. EDT
YouTube Live



featuring:

Sylvia Schwartz, baroque violin
John Ott, baroque cello

Program

Sonata in G Major, BWV 1021.....Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Adagio
Vivace
Largo
Presto

Cello Suite 2 in D Minor, BWV 1008.....Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Prelude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Menuet I & II
Gigue

Violin Partita 3 in E Major, BWV 1006.....Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Gigue

Fin

Program Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was one of the most influential composers in Germany in the early 18th century. Born to a family of famous musicians, Bach accepted a number of appointments as organist until his first court appointment at Weimar in 1708. From 1717-1723 he worked in Cöthen for the great patron of music Prince Leopold, playing organ and composing for a variety of instruments and ensembles. In 1723 he gained a position in Leipzig as Kantor at the Thomasschule and civic director of music in Leipzig. Among his responsibilities were teaching the young musicians at the school, and composing and performing music in the churches of Leipzig every Sunday. By this point in his life he was celebrated as a composer and teacher, and many of his students became successful composers as well, notably his sons Wilhelm Friedrich, Carl Philipp Emanuel, and Johann Christian. Bach is credited with being the master of counterpoint and imitation, and his music has been studied and imitated by composers for centuries.

The Violin Sonata BWV 1021 was not published, but was preserved in a manuscript copy in the hand of Bach's wife and copyist, Anna Magdalena Bach. This manuscript was discovered by Friedrich Blume in the 1920's. It was written sometime in the early 1730's, and was likely used as an educational exercise, as it shares a bass line with at least two other pieces, a trio sonata and a violin sonata with keyboard obbligato. Though both of those pieces have been attributed to Bach, their authorship is considered spurious, and the bass line itself may have come from an outside source, such as a music theory textbook.

Bach's six cello suites, composed during his time in Cöthen, are some of the earliest surviving works composed for solo cello. They have been continuously studied and performed by cellists ever since, and have been published continuously ever since. Bach's original manuscript does not survive, but hand-copied versions by Anna Magdalena Bach, by Bach's friend Peter Kellner, by the publisher Johann Christoph Westphal, and others have allowed the pieces to be studied and published as close to Bach's original as possible. Still, many bowings and even notes and rhythms vary between the versions. Though the suites are all written in the same form, each one is different in character and mood. The D Minor Suite is dark and somber, yet also uncharacteristically virtuosic, featuring both large and complex chords and sections of very fast notes.

Bach's six Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin were written in 1720, also in Cöthen. Like the cello suites, they are some of the most beloved pieces of the violin repertoire, and have been continuously studied by violinists since their composition. However, these works are still at the pinnacle of the violin repertoire in terms of difficulty and familiarity with the instrument. Bach himself was a very gifted violinist, and he explores the full technical range of the violin in these works. The E Major Partita in particular features not just chords but two and three voice counterpoint, as well as many bow techniques such as *barriolage*, where the bow rolls between three and four strings.

About Us

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. During his two years in Massachusetts, aside from his Longy ensembles, he performed with Boston Camerata and Boston Opera Collaborative. He has played with the Orange County-based early music group L'Esprit Baroque since 2014. He maintains a large teaching studio, primarily at Vienna Music Institute in Irvine, CA, and is the cello coach for three high schools in Irvine Unified School District.

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 Guts, L'Esprit Baroque, Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, LA Chamber Chorale, The Meistersingers, Eudaimonia—A Purposeful Period Band, Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra, Harvard Early Music Society, New Bedford Symphony, New England Classical Singers, and Lizzie and the Flakjackets throughout the United States and Canada, in Estonia, Latvia, and at Shostakovich Hall in St. Petersburg, Russia. Sylvia earned 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 teaches privately in person and online, for the Irvine Unified School District, and at Vienna Music Institute in Irvine, California, and concertizes frequently with Guts and L'Esprit Baroque.

About Historically-Informed Performance Practice

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 long baroque bow made by Louis Bégin. John will play a (modern)

French cello of unknown origin, constructed around 1915, with a bow also made by Louis Bégin. 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, typically 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 to the circumstances of performance, 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 of this time is generally 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.

For more information about upcoming concerts, recordings, and special projects, please visit us at gutsbaroque.com.
On the Contact page is a red button to sign up for our email list, which we warmly welcome you to do!

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Our deep gratitude extends to the following Patrons already making monthly sustaining donations to support our music-making:

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Acknowledgements

Sylvia is currently raising funds to purchase the instrument you hear on our recorded concert, and is deeply grateful to the following people who have contributed more than \$12,000 since November 2017, matching her own payments of more than \$8,000, and totaling 92% of funding needed by November of this year:

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If you would like to help us raise the last \$1,500 by November,
please visit our fundraising page at:

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

or contact us at info@gutsbaroque.com

