

Cellist Tanya Tomkins

in conversation with Elizabeth Blumenstock

Our artistic director, Elizabeth Blumenstock, talked with some of the artists appearing in the 2019 Baroque Music Festival, “Bach: The Master and His Milieu.” We hope you enjoy these two-minute reads!

EB

What art form besides music do you find most compelling, and why?

TT

I am amazed at how people are cooking these days, and I would call that an art form. When I cook myself, it is freeing because I never follow recipes and just follow my intuition. Sometimes it turns out great! Even in an amazing restaurant where everything is worked out and practiced ahead to perfection, the product only lasts as long as the time it takes for people to eat it. It is very temporal, like music. Then there are only memories.



EB

Why do you love the music of Bach? Yes, I’m making an assumption here, but I bet it’s a safe one!

TT

I get easily bored. That probably has a diagnosis. Only playing bridge and playing Bach can keep me focused for any real length of time.

There are so many things happening at once in Bach’s music — the counterpoint, the harmony, the melody — all interacting with each other in every moment. It’s impossible for the mind to wander. It is a very visceral experience to play. It is also an honor to get to partake in this composer’s musical thoughts. Never a dull moment!

EB

How do you find teaching has impacted your own development as a musician and performer?

TT

Teaching brings a huge awareness to what you already know but didn’t know you knew. For instance, I have discovered through coaching chamber music that not everyone thinks about phrasing the way I do. I envision stories that go with the musical form. Students love this, but even other professionals don’t interpret in this way. I thought everyone did, until I started teaching. I also feel so much better after teaching somebody. It doesn’t matter how tired I am or much I might not think I have the energy for it. Inevitably, I get so much energy from it. Especially if I think I may have helped a student overcome an obstacle.

EB

If you could time travel to one particular place in Europe, and see one composer or performer at work, who and what would you most like to see?

TT

I would love to be able to meet Beethoven, even though I am sure he wouldn't give me the time of day, and if he did, it would probably not turn out to be a very pleasant exchange. Still, I would be so curious to meet this person, see where and how he worked, and maybe take a walk or have a coffee with him.



For the 2019 Festival, [Tanya Tomkins](#) is featured in our Wednesday “Gardens” chamber concert as the soloist in Bach’s *Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major*, BWV 1007. Wednesday, June 26, 2019 at 8 p.m., Sherman Library & Gardens, Corona del Mar, CA.

For information about tickets and subscriptions to this year’s Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar, visit the Festival [website](#).

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