



Together! Virtuoso Trios from Sherman Gardens

Elizabeth Blumenstock & Janet Strauss, *violins*

Michael Kaufman, *cello*

Ian Pritchard, *harpsichord*

Underwritten through the generous donations of Steven & Cynthia Dember and Dr. Vina R. Spiehler. Janet Strauss's participation is sponsored by Ruth & Wayne Norman.

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Trio Sonata in C major, BWV 1037

Adagio · Alla breve · Largo · Gigue

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Sonata No. 6 in G minor, Z. 807

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)

Ciaccona "La Virginia" in G major, Op. 2, No. 12

Largo - Allegro

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Trio Sonata in A major, Op. 1, No. 9

Preludio · Adagio · Allemanda · Corrente

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725)

Variations on "La Folia"

for solo harpsichord

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725)

Sonata for Cello and Continuo in C major, No. 3

Largo · Allegro · Amoroso · Presto

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)
Trio Sonata in B-flat major, Op. 2, No. 3
Andante · Allegro · Larghetto · Allegro

Filmed June 2021 at Sherman Library & Gardens, Corona del Mar, CA.
Video Filming and Audio Recording by Rumley Music & Audio Production.

About the Program

I may have to apologize for claiming that our opening trio sonata is by **Johann Sebastian Bach**. Many scholars now believe it to be the work of Bach's student Johann Gottlieb Goldberg (1726–1756)—an enormously gifted sometime protégé of both Bach and his son Wilhelm Friedemann—best known to us as the first performer (not the dedicatee) of Bach's famed “Goldberg Variations.” If Goldberg composed our trio, my hat is off to him, as his very young self clearly profited from his studies with the master, and his compositional abilities must have equaled or surpassed his keyboard skills! Each movement of this wonderful trio sonata devotes itself to a different mode of composition. The sweet and lyrical Adagio is in the ornate High Baroque style and is followed by an uncommonly jaunty and excellent fugue. A plaintive canon for the violins follows, and the work closes with a fine, buoyant jig.

Our next two offerings are presented as a pair, as they are both “chaconnes”—pieces composed over a repeating bass line. They share the same tonality of G, but not the mode: the sonata of **Henry Purcell** is in the minor, while the piece by **Arcangelo Corelli** is in the major mode. As you will notice, mode is a powerful tool for conveying a mood. During his very productive and terribly short life, Purcell composed two published sets of trio sonatas, one titled “12 Sonatas of Three Parts” and the other “10 Sonatas in Four Parts.” A closer examination of the second set, from which our selection is taken, reveals that the title is not entirely accurate, and the set could have been so named to boost sales. Generally, in trio sonatas, the cellist (or viola da gamba player, or bassoonist) plays the same line of written music as the left hand of the keyboard player; the two players together comprise the basso continuo, and, with the two upper parts, yield a total of three written lines of music—a trio. In the set of trios in four parts, Purcell has simply written his keyboard player a simpler version of the bass line, and even omitted brief passages entirely here and there, allowing the cellist to have something like a brief solo line—a trio in “four parts.” The so-called fourth part really amounts to little more than a minimal variation of the third part. I cannot help wondering if there was much consumer disgruntlement when this mild sham was discovered, but I'll bet that all was forgiven at the very first reading of these works of genius. Our sonata, the sixth, is unique in that it does not follow the usual sequence of sections in contrasting tempos and moods but is built from beginning to end on a repeating bass line. In this formally

limited style, composers must display their brilliance mostly through changes in figuration. Purcell laces this magnificent effort with much imitative writing and poignant “blue” harmonic moments. We now emerge from the dolorous G-minor London skies into the Roman sunshine of Corelli’s little G-major *ciaccona* “La Virginia.” The piece begins with a brief Largo that prefigures the repeating bass line, which in turn slips gently into the delightful Allegro.

Vivaldi is not best known for his trio sonatas his hundreds of concertos having eclipsed these smaller efforts. They are quite lovely, though, and show Corelli’s unmistakable influence. Corelli often combined sonata and dance movements, and Vivaldi follows suit here. While much of this trio sonata could almost have been composed by Corelli, Vivaldi’s distinctive dramatic flair surfaces in the opening of the Adagio. The arresting “triptych” structure of the opening movement sits rather oddly with the two following dance movements, in my opinion, rather as if some person made a grand entrance at a party, masked, with plumed hat and bejewelled cape, then removed those items, revealing a less exotic face and clothing.

Encountering the **Alessandro Scarlatti** harpsichord works and cello sonatas has, honestly, ransomed him from the lukewarm opinion I’d had of him previously. His oratorios, of which I have performed quite a few, had left me with the somewhat sour impression that he was cranking them out; while there were always a few terrific arias, it seemed to me that too much was uninspired, even sketchy. But his Variations on “La Folia,” which appear as the second part of his Toccata per cembalo d’Ottava stesa, are quite simply phenomenal. A subtle but incredibly effective feature is that, unlike every other set of Folia (“Madness”) variations I have heard—many!—this one does not have each variation come to a close in the home key. Instead, each one ends in the dominant, which provides a natural invitation to the following one. This small amendment turns the work from a set of discrete “set pieces”—where each variation simply finishes and another one begins—into a freewheeling, almost phantasmagorical journey through a wild series of character transformations, truly deserving of the name “Madness.” The Sonata for Cello and Continuo, on the other hand, shows a far saner and sweeter Scarlatti. The slow movements are tender and reflective, and the quick movements manage to combine simplicity and hustle-and-bustle with enormous charm. Clearly, this composer had a far greater range than I had previously thought. A big thank-you to Ian for proposing “La Folia” for our program!

Handel composed some 28 trio sonatas. Maybe! His London publisher, John Walsh, was an enterprising, even shady, businessman, who thought nothing of publishing Handel’s scores without informing the composer. He compiled his own groupings of Handel’s movements, at least in the case of Handel’s Opus 3 concerti grossi, and several inclusions are now considered not to be by Handel at all. There is no unsavory smell attached to our Op. 2, No. 3, however. Considered as a whole, many of Handel’s trios are rather similar to each other, not only in moods, but even in actual thematic motifs and specific figuration. Indeed, after nearly 40 years of

familiarity with them, I cannot keep them straight! Two of his often-used slow movement affects could be named “After an Excellent Luncheon” and “Operatic Love Duet.” The Andante that begins his Op. 2, No. 3 trio is a particularly fine example of the first, and the Larghetto a wonderful evocation of a passion à deux. All leap to attention for the zesty, rollicking second-movement Allegro, written in Handel’s idiosyncratic fugal style. Handel is no Bach (or Goldberg?) when it comes to Allegro fugues! His subjects are generally so exuberant and playful that you can tell that he is simply not going to get serious about them. No, he will abruptly go astray; his parts will not share the material fairly; his counterpoint will exhibit the occasional faux pas; and you will enjoy all of it thoroughly! There are several solo breaks for the first violin (“episodes” in fugal nomenclature). The final Allegro is written more or less in ritornello form, and the solos here feel a bit more like little concerto solos.

Notes by Elizabeth Blumenstock

About the Artists

Elizabeth Blumenstock is a longtime concertmaster, soloist and leader with the Bay Area’s Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and American Bach Soloists; concertmaster of the International Handel Festival in Göttingen, Germany; and artistic director of the Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar. She is widely admired as a Baroque violinist of expressive eloquence and technical sparkle whose performances have been called “rapturous” and “riveting.” Blumenstock’s love of chamber music has involved her in several accomplished and interesting smaller ensembles, including Musica Pacifica, the Galax Quartet, Ensemble Mirable, Live Oak Baroque, the Arcadian Academy, Trio Galanterie, and Voices of Music. She has performed at the Boston and Berkeley Early Music Festivals, the Carmel Bach Festival, the Oulunsalo Soi festival in Finland, and the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival, among many others. She has recorded over 100 CDs for Harmonia Mundi, Dorian/Sono Luminus, Virgin Veritas, Koch, Naxos, Reference Recordings and others. An enthusiastic teacher, Blumenstock conducts classes at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and teaches at the American Bach Soloists’ summer Festival and Academy, at the International Baroque Institute at Longy, and at the Valley of the Moon Music Festival in Sonoma, California. She began teaching Historical Performance at Juilliard in 2016. She plays a violin built by Andrea Guarneri in 1660, in Cremona, which is on generous loan to her from the Philharmonia Baroque Period Instrument Trust.

An exciting cellist exploring various facets of the classical music scene, **Michael Kaufman** was the soloist for the opening of the renovated Kodak Hall at Eastman Theater and has performed at prestigious venues such as Zankel Hall and Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall. Concerto performances and chamber music engagements have taken him across the United States and Western Europe

to festivals such as Open Chamber Music at Prussia Cove, Yellow Barn, Music@Menlo and the Verbier Festival, Switzerland. Founder and artistic director of Sunset ChamberFest and founding member of the cello quintet SAKURA, Michael champions eclectic juxtapositions of music from the classical and contemporary canon and is an advocate for guiding and cultivating future generations of composers. He received his bachelor's degree from Eastman studying with Steven Doane, and his master's and doctorate degrees from the University of Southern California under the mentorship and guidance of Ralph Kirshbaum. Michael is a member of the Los Angeles Opera orchestra and is on the faculty of Loyola Marymount University and Colburn Community School of Performing Arts.

Ian Pritchard specializes in historical keyboard practice as a harpsichordist, organist and musicologist. He has performed with many leading early-music ensembles, such as the Academy of Ancient Music, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Florilegium. As a chamber musician, he has won numerous international prizes and has collaborated with leading figures in early music such as Monica Huggett, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Christopher Hogwood, Emanuelle Haïm, Nicholas McGegan, Trevor Pinnock, Kenneth Gilbert and Gustav Leonhardt. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree at Oberlin, then moved to London to study at the Royal Academy of Music. In 2018 he was awarded a Ph.D. in Musicology at USC. Pritchard appears frequently with leading local musical ensembles such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Musica Angelica, and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and is the music director of the early-music ensemble Tesserae. His interests include keyboard music of the late Renaissance and early Baroque, improvisation, notation and performance practice. He is currently a full-time faculty member at the Colburn School Conservatory of Music, and in 2015 was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music. His harpsichord is a copy of an instrument by Johannes Ruckers, 1624, Colmar, France, by Earl Russell, Oberlin, Ohio, USA, 1999.

Janet Strauss enjoys an active career as a Baroque violinist. Her performances have been called “virtuoso” and “pristine and crystalline, while fully infused with 18th-century accents of passion.” As a leading violinist in Los Angeles, she has appeared with the Los Angeles Opera, and Los Angeles Master Chorale, and is a principal member of Los Angeles-based Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra. She often appears with Bach Collegium San Diego, Seattle Baroque, Portland Baroque Orchestra and Trinity Consort (Portland, OR) where she has worked with Monica Huggett, Eric Milnes, Reinhard Goebel, Paul Goodwin and Richard Egarr. Janet has performed with American Bach Soloists, Musica Pacifica, San Francisco Bach Choir, Magnificat, Camerata Pacifica and Galanterie. She has performed at the Indianapolis Early Music Festival, Tage Alte Musik Regensburg, Brighton Early Music Festival, Renaissance and Baroque Society Pittsburgh, and for many years at the Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar. Janet holds a Bachelor of Music degree in performance from the University of Southern California, is co-founder of the

Los Angeles-based chamber ensemble Angeles Consort, and teaches privately in the Los Angeles area. She has recorded for Koch, Centaur and Loft Recordings.

About the Baroque Music Festival, Corona del Mar

Directed by Baroque violinist **Elizabeth Blumenstock**, the festival typically offers five professional concerts over eight days every June. We enjoy the talents of extraordinary musicians playing Baroque instruments, and of singers who are sensitive to historical styles, performing in intimate venues in Corona del Mar and Newport Beach. In 2020-2021 we offered a number of virtual events: visit bmf-cdm.org/videos to watch them at your leisure! The festival's mission is to present the astounding wealth and diversity of the Baroque era in a wide variety of ways. Large-scale works, with and without singers, are typically offered on our Sunday concerts, while our three mid-week programs give the opportunity to enjoy smaller scale vocal and chamber performances, all given by the finest musicians in the historically informed Baroque field. Save the dates for our 2022 in-person festival: June 19-26, 2022.

Learn more at our website **bmf-cdm.org**