

EARLY MUSIC FOUNDATION presents

EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK
FREDERICK RENZ – DIRECTOR

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BACH BROTHERHOOD
Johann Sebastian's Peers

First Church of Christ, Scientist
Central Park West at 68th Street, NYC

Saturday, 6 May 2017, 7:30 PM

BACH BROTHERHOOD ~ JOHANN SEBASTIAN'S PEERS

Ouverture, HWV 1, 1704, Hamburg
from the Singspiel "Almira" Georg Friedrich Händel
1685-1759

Adagio/Presto

Concerto grosso, Opus 6:6, HWV 324, 1739, London

Largo affettuoso

A tempo giusto

Musette: Larghetto

Allegro

Allegro

Sinfonia, BWV 212, 1742 Johann Sebastian Bach
from the Peasant Cantata ("Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet") 1685-1750

Aria, BWV 212 "Klein-Zschocher müsse so zart süsse"
(adaptation for instruments)

Ouverture, GWV 418 Christoph Graupner
[Adagio-Allegro-Adagio] 1683-1760

Rondeau

Polonoise

La Costanza

Menuet I & II

Il Sospetto

La Noia

Villanella

Menuet I & II

Sinfonia, BWV 150, 1712 Johann Sebastian Bach
from the cantata "Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich" 1685-1750

Sinfonia, BWV 209, 1729?

from the cantata "Non sa che sia dolore"

Aria (Folia), BWV 212, 1742 "Unsre trefflicher"

from the Peasant Cantata (adaptation for instruments)

interval

Sinfonia, TWV 20:39, 1757
from the cantata "Die Tageszeiten"
Hurtig[e] [Allegro]
Tändelnd, und immer gelinde [Andante]
Geschwinde [Presto]

Georg Philipp Telemann
1681-1767

Concerto FaWV L:D9
Allegro
Andante
Allegro

Johann Friedrich Fasch
1688-1758

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EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK

REDERICK RENZ - DIRECTOR

violins

Daniel Lee - concertmaster
Nicholas DiEugenio - principal
Dongmyung Ahn
Chloe Fedor
Peter Kupfer
Jeremy Rhizor
Edson Scheid

violas

Rachel Evans - principal
Kate Goddard

basses

Ezra Seltzer, violoncello - principal
Sarah Stone, violoncello
David Chapman, violone

Immanuel Davis - transverse flute
David Ross - transverse flute

Anna Marsh - bassoon

Stephen Rapp - harpsichord

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Tonight's program is playfully called "Bach Brotherhood," a phrase open to myriad interpretations. Music was virtually the Bach family business: Johann Sebastian's father had musical brothers, as did Johann himself; four of his sons also became respected composers. But tonight we only hear music by the one, if not the only, Johann Sebastian. (There was another Johann Sebastian Bach, a grandson, but he became a painter.)

So what brotherhood are we dealing with here? Among brothers, there is usually a keen sense of competition, and so it was in 18th-century Germany, where a great demand for music saw many composers vying for prestigious church and court positions. Thus, it is possible to look at tonight's five composers as part of a larger musical brotherhood, co-existing and competing in a flourishing artistic environment.

By today's standards, these composers are often divided into three categories: the great (Bach and Händel), the good (Telemann) and the obscure (Fasch and Graupner). It calls for a stretch of our imagination to understand that, in their day, the "good" Telemann and the "obscure" Fasch and Graupner were more popular than Bach. Indeed, Bach had been the third choice for Cantor of the school at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, where he spent his last 27 years, after Telemann turned it down and Graupner could not secure a release from his royal employer. (Fasch, who had been a schoolboy there, was invited to apply, but withdrew his name after learning of Bach's candidacy.)

These composers either knew each other, or at least knew each other's music. The "six degrees of separation" game produces some alluring trivia, beyond the St. Thomas sweepstakes. For example, early in their careers, Händel and Graupner both played in the Hamburg opera orchestra; both had operas staged there. Telemann was godfather to Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel. Fasch was one of Graupner's few students. Telemann and Fasch founded competing "collegia musica" (musical societies) in Leipzig, one of which Bach eventually took over. Bach and Händel never met, but the same eye surgeon performed unsuccessful operations on them both. (Bach and Handel both ultimately went blind, as did the surgeon, who, as far as we know, did not operate on himself.)

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The baroque transverse flute, a featured instrument on this program, is a precursor of the modern flute. It is held the same way, but has a body of wood rather than metal, and only one or two keys, with finger holes for changing the pitch. This most evocative wind instrument, with its warm, woody tone, is a particular favorite of Maestro Renz.

All five composers wrote beautifully for the flute, but today we'll focus on only three, and leave flute music of Händel and Telemann for another day. The Graupner and Fasch

works offer ravishing passages that showcase the baroque flute's manifold possibilities. Bach's flute writing requires not only beauty of tone, but an almost athletic command of the instrument, with melodic lines that range high and low in quick succession.

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Several baroque instrumental forms are represented on tonight's program. According to Maestro Renz:

"The roots of modern-day orchestral music can be found in such works: ouvertures (dance suites), solo concertos, concerti grossi (wherein soloist and orchestra share equal prominence); and especially sinfonias, whose three relatively brief movements -- fast, slow, fast -- would become the framework upon which later composers would build the classical symphony."

Georg Friedrich Händel was just 19 when his first opera, *Almira*, was produced in Hamburg. Very successful at its premiere in 1705, the opera soon slipped into obscurity until the recent revival of interest in Händel's theatrical works. Händel's 12 Concerti Grossi, Op. 6 (published in 1739) are among the greatest examples of baroque instrumental writing by any composer. At the heart of the sixth concerto is the popular *Musette*, about which English music historian Charles Burney (1726-1814) wrote:

"The Musette, or rather chaconne, in this Concerto, was always in favour with the composer himself, as well as the public; for I well remember that HANDEL frequently introduced it between the parts of his Oratorios, both before and after publication. Indeed no instrumental composition that I have ever heard during the long favour of this, seemed to me more grateful and pleasing, particularly, in subject."

For flute music by **Johann Sebastian Bach**, people rarely look beyond his second orchestral suite. But much outstanding flute writing can be found in his cantatas, of which there are more than 200. Maestro Renz has assembled three sinfonias and two arias (with vocal lines adapted for instruments) from three different cantatas. (In this, he follows a time-honored tradition: Many composers, Bach and Händel especially, often repurposed their own music - and sometimes that of others - as occasion demanded.)

Three of these movements come from a non-sacred work, popularly known as the *Peasant Cantata*, from 1742. The concerto-like Sinfonia, and indeed much of the cantata, incorporates popular tunes of the day. The aria that follows the Sinfonia describes how sweet it is to live in the town of Klein-Zschocher (part of the territory governed by the cantata's honoree). The sinfonias that bookend the second Bach grouping come from different cantatas: number 150, an early work, probably from 1707; and number 209, from 1747, late in Bach's career. The aria, again from the *Peasant Cantata*, incorporates the famous musical theme *La folia*, which has inspired various flights of fancy from over 100 composers, ranging from Corelli and Handel to Rachmaninoff and Vangelis.

The prolific **Christoph Graupner** composed nearly 2,000 works before blindness curtailed his activity six years before his death. An estate dispute relegated virtually all of Graupner's music to obscurity until recently: A judicial decision assigned ownership of his manuscripts to the court of Hesse-Darmstadt, his employer, rather than to his heirs. This was bad news for the Graupners, but good news for posterity, as the resulting oblivion served to preserve virtually all his music, rarely the case with better-known composers. His extensive output has been a gold mine for contemporary musicologists.

The Overture on tonight's program, dating from about 1730, is a typical suite of dance movements. It has some evocative (and mysterious) movement titles, such as *La Costanza*, *Il Sospetto* and *La Noia* (constancy, suspicion and boredom, respectively). It is unknown if these are references to a secret program. (Constancy is in the key of D Major, while suspicion and boredom are in the moodier d minor.) The work's international scope, beyond movement titles in both French and Italian, extends to the inclusion of a Polonaise (a national dance of Poland) and a Villanella (an Italian country dance).

Die Tageszeiten ("The Times of the Day") is a cantata cycle by **Georg Philipp Telemann**, from 1757, fairly late in his illustrious career. Where Antonio Vivaldi depicted the seasons in a series of concertos, Telemann based his cantatas upon different parts of the day. The opening sinfonia, for strings only, describes the dawn, with the usual "fast-slow-fast" structure, although he employs German movement titles, which translate roughly as "fast," "trifling, ever gentle" and "swift."

Johann Friedrich Fasch toiled away in the town of Zerbst for the latter half of his life, churning out reams of music while enduring oppressive administrative duties. But Fasch was the ultimate networker, staying in touch with his counterparts in other parts of Germany, sending them his music and performing theirs. Among his admirers were Telemann and Bach, who both performed his works. Not much is known about the concerto that closes this program. It probably dates from 1735 to 1745. Its three movements put the two flutes through their paces, providing ample opportunity for both teamwork and virtuosity.

Daniel Guss

Special thanks to Leanne Mahoney - First Church of Christ, Scientist
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