

VANCOUVER BACH FESTIVAL 2021

TUESDAY AUGUST 3 AT 4:15 PM | CHAN CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

THE ARTISTS

Elinor Frey

CELLO

**Pacific Baroque
Orchestra**

Alexander Weimann

MUSIC DIRECTOR

This concert is generously supported in memory of
Vic Baker

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



CHAN CENTRE
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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PROGRAMME

BACH'S SONS

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710-1784)
BWV 1070 Suite for orchestra in g minor

Larghetto - Un poco allegro
Torneo
Aria
Menuetto
Capriccio

Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach (1732-1795)
Sonata for cello and basso continuo in A major

Larghetto
Allegro
Tempo di Minuetto

Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782)
Chromatic Fugue on B-A-C-H in F major
for keyboard solo

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)
**Concerto for violoncello, strings, and basso continuo
in A minor (H. 432)**

Allegro assai
Andante
Allegro assai

THIS PROGRAMME WILL BE PERFORMED WITHOUT AN INTERVAL

Early Music Vancouver acknowledges that we are gathered on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples – Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations.

PROGRAMME NOTES

BY ELINOR FREY

The four sons of Johann Sebastian Bach had long careers as professional musicians, each unique in their musical output and personal character. In his lifetime, the eldest son (and sometimes named favourite?), **Wilhelm Friedmann Bach** (1710-1784), achieved some measure of success through official posts in Dresden and Halle as an organist and built a reputation as a brilliant improviser. The end of his life was spent in Berlin somewhat floundering as a performer, barely active as a composer. The royal courts of mid-eighteenth century Berlin were lively crossroads for some of the greatest musicians of the time. Court musicians and visitors were famous virtuosos performing music full of expressivity and fantasy. It is in this context that the second-eldest, **Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach** (1714-1788), found a thriving career as a keyboard player and composer before succeeding his godfather, Telemann, as Kapellmeister in Hamburg. Emmanuel Bach kept in close contact with his two half-brothers, **Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach** (1732-1795), long-time Konzertmeister of the Bückeburg Hofkapelle, and the youngest of the four, **Johann Christian Bach** (1735-1782), who is known for his career in London but first moved to Berlin to study and live with his brother after the death of their father, Johann Sebastian, in 1750.

Although the Orchestral Suite in G Minor was given a BWV number in the catalogue of J.S. Bach, it is generally thought to belong among the works of Wilhelm Friedmann. The suite departs from the father's practices for orchestral suites in two main ways: the form of the opening movement and the use of a different key for the *Aria* (J.S. Bach's suites remain in one key). The suite also features some unusual and interesting movements including a *Torneo* (tournament) which implies a sporting event, perhaps even an extravagant equestrian ballet. Overall, the suite makes use of both *galant* idioms and a more strict counterpoint, a mixing of styles often characteristic of Wilhelm Friedmann's music.

His half-brother Johann Christoph Friedrich's Cello Sonata in A Major also exhibits many hallmarks of the *Galant* and also the correlated *Empfindsamer stil*, calling for various changes in dynamic, both abrupt and subtle, at the service of beautiful melodies and expressive fantasy. Friedrich's close association with his brother, Carl Philipp Emmanuel, is evidenced by the printing of the sonata in the latter's *Musikalisches Vierleiter* of 1770, a kind of subscription-based publication of various chamber works from well-known composers such as Graun, Fasch, and Kirnberger. This Sonata in A Major follows the Slow-Fast-Fast form which O'Loghlin calls the "Berlin sonata schema" in which the opening movement is long and substantial and ends with a cadenza. The five-string cello particularly supports passagework using a pedal on the open E-string. Indeed, many mid-18th century sonatas for cello seem liberated, natural, and comprehensible when played on an instrument fitted with a

fifth string, even if this instrument was not named in the score. The most famous example of 18th-century music that expressly calls for a 5-string cello is J.S. Bach's sixth suite.

J.S. Bach educated his sons and was a source of inspiration throughout their lives, as well as for countless other students and colleagues. The Bach family name was synonymous with music as the lineage of Bach musicians went back for generations. Sebastian Bach famously employed the musical cryptogram "B-A-C-H" in his Art of the Fugue and in a few other works. This melodic fragment created by the family name, B-flat, A, C, B-natural, was also taken up by Johann Christian Bach in his Chromatic Fugue in F Major.

Like A Major Sonata by J.C.F. Bach, the Cello Concerto in A Minor of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach also demonstrates the language of Sensibility (*Empfindsamkeit*): an expression of sadness, anger, wrath, joy, love, and praise. In their music, emotions are fleeting and instantaneous and, above all, the beauty of melody is emphasized. As is the case with cello works produced in other European musical centres, C.P.E. Bach's cello concertos are closely tied to prosperous patrons and to the presence of elite professionals in Berlin (in particular at three of the Hohenzollern courts, those of King Frederick II "the Great", his sister Anna Amalia, and his nephew, the Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm II). The cello may also have been featured at many of the flourishing musical academies and private concerts throughout Berlin.

Cello repertoire and cello playing are not often thought to be among the principal contributions of mid-eighteenth-century Berlin composers. More prolific and renowned were the performers on the flute (Quantz, Frederick the Great himself), violin (Benda, J.G. Graun), gamba (L.C. Hesse), and keyboards (C.P.E. Bach). Viola da gamba repertoire flourished under the presence of Ludwig Christian Hesse and the enthusiasm of his student, Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm II. The Prince supposedly favoured the cello after the 1769 departure of Hesse and employed both Carlo Graziani and Jean-Pierre Duport as his private instructors in subsequent years, and was the dedicatee of works by Boccherini, Beethoven, and Mozart. In any case, it's in Berlin in 1750 (the year of J.S. Bach's death) that CPE Bach wrote the Concerto in A Minor for cello and strings. Likely performed at a chamber music society event by one of the various prominent cellists of court ensembles, Bach later transcribed the work as a keyboard concerto and then again as a flute concerto. The unusual $\frac{3}{2}$ metre in the opening *Allegro assai* sets the stage for a tempestuous and dramatic work. Fragmented and blustery exchanges between soloist and orchestra permeate the concerto, including in the *Andante*, which abounds in contrast as well as tenderness. ■

PACIFIC BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

Alexander Weimann

MUSIC DIRECTOR & HARPSICHORD

VIOLIN I	Chloe Meyers concertmaster
	Majka Demcak
	Kathryn Wiebe
VIOLIN II	Christi Meyers
	Elyssa Lefurgey-Smith
VIOLA	Mieka Michaux
CELLO	Mélisande Corriveau
VIOLONE	Natalie Mackie