



Saturday 7 July 2012

7.30pm

St. Cecilia's Hall

Duo Allemand

Peter Wendland · viola da gamba

David Roblou · harpsichord

From Baroque to Classic



The Sybert Summer Concert Series

**Nine variations on 'Herr Jesu Christ du höchstes Gut' in G minor
for viol and harpsichord**

August Kühnel (1645-c.1700)

Suite No.6 in G major for viol and harpsichord

Conrad Höffler (1647-1705)

Preludio, Adagio, Allegro

Courant

Saraband

Giga

Three movements in E flat major BWV 998 for harpsichord

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Prelude

Fugue

Allegro

Sonate No.2 in D minor for viol and harpsichord

Jacob Richmann (c.1680-1726)

Preludio [Largo, Allegro, Adagio]

Allemanda

Corrente

Sarabanda (Allegro)

Giga

Sonate in G minor for viol and harpsichord

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Andante

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro

INTERVAL

Suite in A minor for viol and harpsichord

Johann Gottfried Mente (1698-1760)

Lamento

Scherzando

Menuet

Polonoise

Five movements in D minor for viol

Carl Friedrich Abel (1723-1787)

Preludio

Tempo di Minuet

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro

12 Variations on Les Folies d'Espagne for harpsichord

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)

Sonate No. 1 in A major for viol and harpsichord

Franz Xaver Hammer (c.1741-1817)

Adagio

Allegro tempo giusto

Menuetto

Rondo

Hongares

August Kühnel was in his time very well known in Europe as a viol player. He was born on 3 August 1645 in Delmenhorst. From 1661 to 1681 he was employed by the Herzog Moritz of Sachsen. In 1684 he became Kapellmeister in Kassel and worked from 1686 as a viol player and director of the Instrumentalmusik in Darmstadt. He returned to Kassel in 1695.

The Aria with nine variations is based on the chorale with the words:

Herr Jesu Christ du hoechstes Gut,	Lord Jesus Christ, you highest good
Du Brunnell aller Gnade,	you source of all mercy
Sieh doch, wie ich in meinem Mut	see how in my spirit I
Mit Schmerzen bin beladen	am burdened with sorrows
Und in mir hab der Pfeile viel,	and in me have the pains of many arrows
Die im Gewissen ohne Ziel	which in my conscience without limit
Mich armen Suender druecken.	weigh down me, a poor sinner.

It is the only composition of Kühnel in this style which he published in a collection of 14 Sonatas in 1698.

Conrad Höffler was christened on 30 January 1647 in Nuernberg. He probably received his musical education from Gabriel Schütz who also taught him the viol. Höffler worked as a court musician in Bayreuth, Ansbach, Halle and Weissenfels.

In 1695 he published 12 Suites for viol and harpsichord. All of the suites are very virtuosic and technically demanding; in the suite No 6. one can see that Höffler uses the whole range of the viol. His compositions represent the improvisation and variation style. Especially in his preludes he demonstrates what the viol was able to do at the end of the 17th century in Germany.

J.S. Bach Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E flat major for lute or harpsichord, BWV 998. This is one of a number of keyboard pieces reckoned to be contemporary with the famous Capriccio on the Departure of his Beloved Brother, c.1704; i.e. Bach was around 20 when he composed them. Compared with the tautness and complexity of his later work the style of these pieces is simple; youthful but not gauche. The Prelude, Fugue and Allegro is typical of pieces written for lute, whether subsequently transcribed for harpsichord (often the case in late 17th and early 18th-century France), or written for performance on either. The tessitura of the writing is relatively low, exploiting the middle and bass registers of the keyboard, while there is much use of broken chord figuration throughout and the contrapuntal writing in the fugue is spacious and relaxed.

Jacob Richmann was a viol player and chamber musician first at the court of the princess of Oranien and later of the Kurfuerst of Hessen-Kassel. Richmann also composed other instrumental and vocal work but just the 6 sonatas for viol and continuo survived. Despite calling his compositions sonatas they are suites with characteristic dance movements: prelude, allemanda, corrente, sarabanda and giga. He published around 1710 in Amsterdam. The Suite has five dance movements and is Italian-influenced. He keeps the music interesting by using many chords and freely played ornaments.

The Sonata in G minor is probably the only solo composition **Handel** wrote for the viol. He uses the established Sonata form with four movements. The composition is elegant and one can recognize his taste for vocal phrasing.

Hardly anything about **Johann Gottfried Mente** is known. He was born on 9 November 1698 in Rothenburg an der Oder and died ca. 1760 in Liegnitz. He was an organist and viol player and his only surviving Suite for the viol and continuo was published in 1754. Unusually for a German composer he used a seven-string bass viol to get a very rich and deep sound from the lowest A string. His opening movement, a Lamento, is a very melancholic piece where he alternates between quick passages and chords. The Scherzando like the Polonoise is a more light hearted piece, both demanding the seventh string.

With **Carl Friedrich Abel** (born 1723 in Cöthen and died 1787 in London) we leave the Baroque period behind and reach the more galant / classical style that is also to be recognised in Mozart's work. Abel who was taught by his father and was friendly with the Bach family, worked in Germany as a viol player and cellist in Dresden where he became well known for his improvisation on the viol. Around 1757 Abel had to leave Dresden: the opera closed as a result of the war which lasted for seven years. After a long journey he arrived in London where Handel had already established the German style, and he gave his first concert in 1759. His reputation derived in part from his regular performances at concerts in London for nearly 30 years. He founded the famous Bach-Abel concerts with J.C. Bach in 1765, and this became the principal venue for his regular solo improvisations on the viol described by Burney: "I have heard him modulate....on his six-stringed bass with such practical readiness and depth of science, as astonished the late Lord Kelly and Bach, as much as myself." Together with the sonatas of F.X. Hammer, Abel's music represents the viol at the end of its long career. With his death (not waking up after a long night's drinking) one of the last and greatest virtuoso viol players passed away.

C.P.E. Bach: 12 Variations on Les Folies d'Espagne. La Folia, as it was also called, was one of a number of formulae, along with the Romanesca et al, which formed the basis of compositions (as distinct from improvisations) for instruments (whether string, wind or keyboard) or voice, and written from at least the middle of the 17th century, throughout the 18th and occasionally later. The usual form is a series of variations, preceded and concluded by a statement of the Folia itself. C.P.E. Bach's piece is typical in this regard, as well as demonstrating his quirky and often overtly dramatic style. In so doing he pushed the expressive capacity of the harpsichord to its limit; indeed much of his keyboard music is more effective on the clavichord, reputedly his favourite instrument. It would be only a matter of time before the harpsichord would be superseded by early forms of the piano. This despite efforts in England (J. and A. Kirckman, Schudi and Broadwood) and France (Taskin) to make the innately inflexible harpsichord capable of dynamic expression, sudden dramatic contrasts, etc, whether by use of the Venetian swell, rapid changes of registration effected by pedals or knee levers, or the peau de buffle (plectra of soft leather instead of the usual bird quill).

The cellist and viola da gamba player **Franz Xaver Hammer** was born in 1741 at Öttingen im Riess (Bavaria) and died in 1818. Nothing is known about his musical education and early career. Hammer's performances upon the viola da gamba sadly remain undocumented, although some thirteen cello concerto performances of his at Ludwigslust between 1803 and 1813, by which time he was 72 years old, are recorded. We can assume that Hammer would have preferred the gentler and more intimate tones of the viol for chamber music performances, which were rarely reported. Of all the viola da gamba players of his time, Hammer was possibly the greatest virtuoso, given the consistently high level of technical writing for the instrument. He worked under J. Haydn as cellist of the Esterhazy's court ensemble in Eisenstadt and at the Eszerhaza palace. It is thought that Haydn composed three cello concertos for him.

The sonata No. 1 in A major with five movements represents clearly a classical style and demonstrates all the expressive possibilities of a slowly declining instrument.

A poem written by Thomas Hardy in the 19th century still documenting the existence of the viol:

A church romance

She turned in the high pew, until her sight
Swept the west gallery, and caught its row
Of music-men with viol, book, and bow
Against the sinking sad tower-window light.

She turned again; and in her pride's despite
One strenuous viol's inspirer seemed to throw
A message from his string to her below,
Which said: "I claim thee as my own forthright."

Thus their heart's bond began, in due time signed,
And long years thence, when Age had scared Romance,
At some old attitude of his or glance
That gallery - scene would break upon her mind,
With him as minstrel, ardent, young, and trim,
Bowling "New Sabbath" or "Mount Ephraim".

P.W.

Peter Wendland is a viol player and early music specialist; an accomplished, versatile and sensitive performer on all instruments of the viol family: pardessus de viole to violone. As a soloist he plays the viol repertoire from Ortiz to Abel. Contemporary projects have included a recording with the American cult composer, "Moondog".

As a performer of Bach, he has played the three celebrated sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord obligato in the Bachhaus in Eisenach with Harald Hoeren and in the UK with David Roblou; the gamba solos from the Passions, and performed and recorded the Art of the Fugue with the Koelner Violen Consort. As a consort player he is a longstanding member of the acclaimed Rose Consort of Viols, whose recent guest artists have included Emma Kirkby, Jacob Heringman, Jacob Lindberg, Catherine King and Timothy Roberts. With the Koelner Violen consort in Germany: radio, CDs, premieres of new music for viols and collaborations with lutenist Konrad Junghaenel, oboist Helmut Hucke and cornett player Friedemann Immer. As a teacher he has been a visiting artist at Trinity College of Music in London and taught at summer schools and workshops throughout Europe, including the Dartington International Summer School. He currently teaches viola da gamba at Birmingham Conservatoire. As a specialist in early music he has coached and performed with ensembles ranging from viol consorts, choirs and recorder ensembles to renaissance wind bands.

"Gambenmusik von ergreifender Schönheit" - Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung

David Roblou began his career as an organist, specialising in late 19th, early 20th-century and contemporary music. (He has performed some of Judith Bingham's pieces, for example.) His transfer to harpsichord led to the career in Early Music for which many know him best. However, his involvement with singers (and indeed dancers) from the outset led to work in all musical forms: chamber music, oratorio and opera. The foundation of Midsummer Opera (MD from 1985, Artistic Director from 2000) led to his conducting all the small touring companies in the 90s, including much "mainstream" as well as baroque repertoire. His repertoire now includes 60 operas from c.1600 to world premières of Alison Bauld, Simon Milton, Véronique Souberbielle and Robert Hugill, plus ballet, oratorio and orchestral works of all periods, touring the UK, Europe and the Americas. He has conducted *Le Nozze di Figaro* (rare complete performances) in Holland and recently returned from conducting Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* in Tallinn, Estonia. Meanwhile he has given world and UK premières on both harpsichord and piano, including Simon Milton's *Saturn, twice round the sun*. As coach he has guested at the ROH and ENO, taught at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Birmingham University, Hamburg Hochschule, gives masterclasses internationally and is consulted by singers enjoying careers worldwide.

The keyboard instrument used in this evening's concert is one of the comparatively few surviving harpsichords from Hamburg. It was built in 1764 by Johann Adolph Hass who, like his father, was predominantly a maker of clavichords and for whom harpsichords appear to have been built exclusively on a bespoke basis. Although some Hass harpsichords are extremely complicated, particularly in regard to registration, this instrument is quite standard, having only a single keyboard and three sets of strings, two at unison pitch and one an octave higher. Almost all Hass instruments were very finely decorated, often with precious materials and paintwork. The instrument used tonight is, by contrast, plainly decorated with quartered veneer, something which - for unknown reasons - was applied in the early twentieth century (as were the tapered legs). It might be expected that there was some damage which caused such a redecoration, but no evidence exists on the present instrument, the other parts of which are all in essentially original condition. Soundwise, this is an excellent playing example, having a brightness and bell-like clarity which is ideal for music in which the various lines need to be heard against each other, while combined with a sustain as one would expect from a mid-eighteenth century northern instrument.

Dr Darryl Martin, University of Edinburgh Curator, EUCHMI

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Thanks also to the Friends of St. Cecilia's Hall.