

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES AUTUMN · WINTER 2013

Concerts at The University

Friday 11 October 2013

1.10pm

St Cecilia's Concert Hall

David Watkin · cello

Yati Durant · quadraphonic electronics

Programme of works by J.S. BACH and YATI DURANT.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

Cello Suite No. 1 in G major BWV 1007

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Menuets I and II
Gigue

Bach spent nearly his whole life in the service of the Lutheran Church in an area of a few dozen kilometres. But for a couple of years from 1721 he was Kapellmeister at the Calvinist court of Köthen, and the majority of his secular music hails from this time. Even these works are signed off by Bach: "S.D.G." - "Soli Deo Sit Gloria" (Glory to God alone). He didn't share today's distinction between sacred and secular music. Music in dance meter found its way into even the most profoundly sacred places, such as the *Sarabande* in the final chorus of the Matthew Passion. So it is unsurprising, for instance, that the chord sequence over a tonic pedal which opens the First Suite for solo cello is shared with the opening *Recitative* of the Matthew Passion. Indeed, these same kinds of 'musical archetypes' which are found in his large-scale works appear with similar resonances throughout these Suites, often providing a sense of unity across the dances. The Prelude to the Third Suite, for example features an extended dominant pedal with a chain of suspensions in two 'upper' voices - exactly like that in the opening chorus of the St John Passion. As well as blurring the sacred and secular, Bach also saw no distinction in meaning between his largest- and smallest-scale works.

The Prelude to the First Suite follows the model of the famous first pages of the Well Tempered Clavier - 'harmony expressed in pattern' - simple but complete, even without Gounod's addition of *Ave Maria*. The Suite proper opens with an *Allemande* - a dance already out of date by Bach's day. No choreographies survive, and there are an enormous number of different styles. This one is slow and reflective, but the 3rd Suite's is jumpy and exuberant, while the 5th Suite's is heavily-dotted in the French style. Whichever style he chooses, Bach seems to use the *Allemandes* as a bridge between the narrative world of the *Préludes* and the more strictly metrical world of the other dances. The *Courante* is usually a relative of the virtuosic Italian instrumental *Corrente* found in Corelli. The Suite centres around the majestic *Sarabande*, after which comes a pair of courtly *Menuets*. Like most Baroque dance suites, it closes with a lively *Gigue*.

One breathless account of a *Sarabande* from 1671 gives a sense of what French Baroque dance could involve: "Now and then he would express anger and spite

with an impetuous and turbulent *candence*, and then, evoking a sweeter passion by more moderate motions, he would sigh, swoon, let his eyes wander languidly; [with] certain sinuous movements of the arms and body, nonchalant, disjointed and passionate..."

David Watkin

Cello Suite No. 4 in E flat major BWV 1010 (augmentation)

J.S. Bach / Yati Durant (b.1974)

Prelude
A2 (interlude)
Allemande
Courante:
Overlaid Main Groups (spontaneous interlude)
Sarabande
B2 Algo
Gigue
G-B2

This performance of Bach's *Cello Suite No. 4* is a culmination of a collaborative performance composition between Yati Durant and David Watkin. It is a work, very much within the confines of compositional unity, anchored by the masterwork created by Bach, but augmented by various forces - both electronic and traditionally played - with the premise to view Bach's work in a new light. It involves electronically produced manipulations of recorded material, interactive improvisation, fixed compositional performance based on algorithmic investigations of Bach's work and alterations of live and recorded performance fragments.

The performance is meant as a sort of journey through the transcendent experience of this *Cello Suite*. It is not meant to distort the raw truth of these movements (that could never be completely achieved anyway). Rather, it is an attempt to slightly personify the effervescent transfiguration that these works allow one to feel. It is hoped that the hearer will be able to see beyond these individual sonic manipulations and locate any sub-layers they represent.

Of the traditional layout of this *Cello Suite*, the *Prelude*, *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande* and *Gigue* (fragments) are employed. They are framed by an electronic introduction and conclusion, and interspersed with several fixed compositional templates: *A2 (interlude)*, *Overlaid Main Groups*, *B2 Algo* and finally, *G-B2*.

Yati Durant

David Watkin has made a wide range of recordings including the Vivaldi Cello Sonatas with the King's Consort (Hyperion) and Haydn's *Sinfonia Concertante* with Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (Virgin). With pianist Howard Moody he has recorded Beethoven Cello Sonatas (Chandos) and Francis Pott's 1996 Sonata (Guild). Their London debut in 1988 was described by The Times as 'absolutely electrifying.' They have since broadcast regularly on BBC Radio 3 and performances have included the complete works for piano and cello by Beethoven at Wigmore Hall.

He was Principal cello of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain for two years, played under conductors including Kirill Kondrashin, and received the Bulgin Medal for outstanding contribution. He has been Principal Cello in some of the world's leading ensembles including the Philharmonia Orchestra, where he opened the first season in the new Philharmonie in Luxemburg with William Tell under Muti, and performed solos ranging from those in Brahms' 2nd Piano Concerto under Mackerras, to one in the computer game 'Medal of Honour'.

Unaccompanied Bach has taken him all over Europe, from the Palace of Frederick the Great at Potsdam to the Prague Spring Festival, and, as part of Sir John Eliot Gardiner's Bach Cantata Pilgrimage, included performances sitting by the font in which Bach was baptised.

He has been a soloist with OAE at Queen Elizabeth Hall and Carnegie Hall, New York and performed the Schumann Concerto with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and ORR at the Lincoln Center, New York, and more recently with the SCO. He has been a guest artist with, among others, Robert Levin (QEH, Mozarteum, Salzburg) and Fredericka von Stade (Wigmore Hall, Chatelet, Paris). He has joined the Tokyo Quartet for performances of Schubert's C major Quintet including at Wigmore Hall and Edinburgh International Festival, and their harmonia mundi usa recording together has now been released.

In 2012 he was a juror for the Leipzig Bach Competition, coached for the European Union Baroque Orchestra and 'I, Culture Orchestra' and joined Principal players from the Berlin Philharmonic and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestras in Aldeburgh Strings.

Plans for 2013 include: performances of the Schumann Concerto with SCO and Andrew Manze, further performances of Schubert Quintet with the Tokyo Quartet in their farewell season at East Neuk Festival, Scotland, and in Florence and Warsaw, and recording the six Bach Suites.