

Wednesday, November 8, 2023, 7:30pm
First Congregational Church, Berkeley

Le Consort

Théotime Langlois de Swarte, *violin*
Sophie de Bardonnèche, *violin*
Hanna Salzenstein, *cello*
Justin Taylor, *harpsichord*

A Journey Through Baroque Europe

- Antonio VIVALDI (1678–1741) Trio Sonata in G minor, Op. 1, No. 1 (1705)
Preludio. Grave
Allemanda. Allegro
Adagio
Capriccio. Allegro
Gavotta. Allegro
- Giovanni Battista REALI (1681–1751) Violin Sonata Op. 2, No. 1 (Grave) (1712)
- Arcangelo CORELLI (1653–1713) Trio Sonata in C major, Op. 4, No. 1 (1694)
Preludio, Largo
Corrente, Allegro - Adagio
Allemanda, Presto
- Jean-Philippe RAMEAU (1683–1764) Excerpts from *Les Indes galantes* (1736)
- Jean-François DANDRIEU (1682–1738) Trio Sonata in G minor, Op. 1, No. 3
(1705 or before)
Adagio
Allegro
Adagio
Giga
- CORELLI Violin Sonata in D minor, Op. 5, No. 12,
La Folia (1700)
- Francesco Maria VERACINI (1690–1768) Violin Sonata in A major, Op. 1, No. 7
(finale) (1721)

INTERMISSION



John ECCLES (1668–1735)	Excerpt from <i>The Mad Lover</i> (1700?) Aire (Ground)
Henry PURCELL (1659–1695)	Sonata of Four Parts No. 6 in G minor, Z. 807 (1697)
RAMEAU	Gavotte et ses Doubles (1728)
Johann Sebastian BACH (1685–1750)	Trio Sonata in G major, BWV 1038 (1732-1735) Largo Vivace Adagio Presto
BACH	Andante from Oboe Concerto (Marcello), BWV 974 (1715)
VIVALDI	Trio Sonata in D minor, Op. 1, No. 12, <i>La Follia</i> (1705)

Le Consort appears by arrangement with David Rowe Artists (www.davidroweartists.com).
www.leconsort.com

PROGRAM NOTES

A Journey Through Baroque Europe

At the beginning of the 18th century, the city of Venice was home to a remarkable number of violinists and genius composers. Antonio Vivaldi's talents are beyond question: he has achieved lasting fame as one of the most inventive, prolific, and virtuosic composers of the Baroque period. The **Trio Sonata in G minor, Op. 1, No. 1** is the very work first Vivaldi published, when he was 23 years old. Its five sections mingle elements of the *sonata da chiesa* (Preludio Grave and Adagio) with dances (Allemanda, Capriccio, Gavotta). Vivaldi first plunges us into the intensely contemplative atmosphere of a Venetian church, then surprises us with dance movements in which the violins vie with each other in terms of virtuosity.

As for the violinist-composer Giovanni Battista Reali, his life is shrouded in mystery. He published only two opus numbers:

a set of 12 trio sonatas in 1709, followed in 1712 by solo sonatas for violin and bass continuo. That his trio sonatas were republished in Amsterdam by Estienne Roger in 1710 is proof that his works enjoyed a degree of success, but we know very little of his biography. He is mentioned as being a violinist in Venice's Teatro San Fantin, then in 1727 as *maestro di cappella* for the Duke of Guastalla in Emilia-Romagna—after which we lose all trace of him. This **Grave** is an intimate duet of two violins.

The trio sonata was born during the second half of the 17th century and it was **Arcangelo Corelli**, the master of the genre, who developed, established, and popularized it throughout Europe. A violin virtuoso himself, he devoted his entire output to that instrument. Of the six sets of compositions he left behind, the first four are devoted to the trio with two violins, which became the paramount ensemble of the Baroque era.

The immensely famed Corelli became a model for his contemporaries, having a strong influence on the composers of his own time and on succeeding generations as well. Publication of his works was keenly anticipated throughout the whole of Europe, each new opus enjoying a success even greater than the last. The **Trio Sonata in C major, Op. 4, No. 1** is luminous, with a breathtaking third movement.

“Les Sauvages” is undoubtedly **Jean-Philippe Rameau’s** most famous piece. Originally for harpsichord, it was reorchestrated and inserted into the new “entrée” added in 1736 in his celebrated opera *Les Indes Galantes*. Rameau’s source of inspiration was the presentation, in 1725, at the Théâtre des Italiens, of natives from Louisiana dancing to the sounds of their instruments. Influenced by the exoticism of this encounter, he translated into music this obsessive rhythmic repetition.

The trio sonatas of **Jean-François Dandrieu** really do deserve a place in the very front rank of the chamber music of the period. They show a mastery of style as well as a variety of astonishing character types. There are dances overflowing with energy; a playful, spirited counterpoint between the three voices; movements that seem suspended in time by the most expressive Italianate *ritardandi*, with articulation, phrasing, rhythm, sweetness, and passion.

So who was Dandrieu? Born in 1682, in the heart of Paris, on the Île de la Cité, Jean-François grew up in the family home. From his earliest years he devoted himself to music: even as a young boy he was able to play the harpsichord with tremendous facility. In 1687, aged only five, he presented himself at the court of Versailles before the Princess of the Palatinate, to whom he later dedicated his trio sonatas. On reaching adulthood, Dandrieu decided to consecrate himself to God, taking holy orders.

Dandrieu’s Op. 1 sonatas carry special meaning for us, as they were the very first

works we read during our initial rehearsals. Perhaps we felt a special connection since he was about our ages—23—when he published them. Whatever the reasons, we felt a common bond with his **Trio Sonata in G minor, Op. 1, No. 3**. From our very first rehearsals together, we discovered the darting motifs of those descending appoggiaturas and there was, quite simply, a feeling we all shared: a common rhythm. The ensuing rapid, light-footed Allegro is marked by a fugue that is completely Italian in character. The third movement, meditative, quasi-liturgical, is a contemplation in an introspective lyrical form, without a trace of ostentation. The final gigue brings us back to the French style, with its bass voice recalling the full, earthy style of Forqueray. For all of us, it was the moment of falling in love, both musically and emotionally. This sonata has become our anthem, our watchword, an emblematic banner of our vision of the trio sonata.

The **Violin Sonata in D minor, Op. 5, No. 12** by **Corelli** is a set of virtuosic variations on the popular ground bass in triple time known by its Spanish name *La Folia*—alluding to the “frenzy” of the dance—and is unquestionably among the composer’s most popular works.

Francesco Maria Veracini, was born in Florence and enjoyed a tremendous life travelling across Europe. This final movement from the **Violin Sonata in A major, Op. 1, No. 7**, written in the high register of the Baroque violin, is quite challenging to perform. (Incidentally Veracini played on a violin made by Jakobus Stainer, the maker of Théotime’s instrument)

The Mad Lover began life around 1616 as a comedy by the prolific and versatile English dramatist John Fletcher, a younger contemporary of William Shakespeare (with whom he collaborated on two plays). The score from *Eccles* for a new version of Fletcher’s play, besides its three masques, included an abundance of instrumental

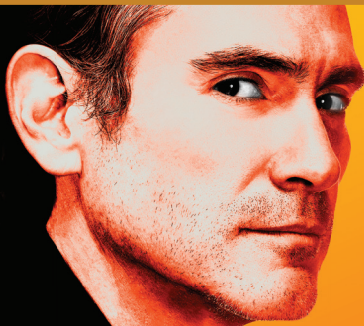
pieces, such as this ground. The descending tetrachord forms a relentless, repetitive motif, one that sticks in the memory with an immediacy that touches all who hear it.

The greatest musical genius of late 17th century London was undoubtedly **Henry Purcell**, an extraordinary musician present on all fronts. At a time when both the form and the instrument already belonged to a fast-disappearing world, he wrote the last fantasias for viols in the great English tradition. He was also enthusiastic about the newer violin and the Italian sonata. Purcell had his *Sonatas of III Parts* printed at his own expense in 1683, a significant risk for the youthful composer, still only 24 years old. And sadly, these works remained misunderstood: the 1683 collection, along with a successor of 1697 (from which these piece is taken) published by his widow after his death, sold so poorly that Frances Purcell

was forced to remainder them, without being able to sell off her stock. Purcell, so beloved for his operas, had bad luck with his sonatas. Yet from the very beginnings of our work as an ensemble, we have performed the wonderful *Sonata of Four Parts No. 6 in G minor, Z. 807*. Built on a ground that repeats itself tirelessly, this work is a compendium of Purcell's genius that examines the human soul in its most intimate aspects, and through its emotional intensity remind us of *Didó's Lament* by the same composer.

In the *Gavotte et ses Doubles*, the term "double," derived from the French air of the 17th century, denotes the variety of reprise of a piece. Here, Rameau has a "orchestral" bent, his variations are based on rhythm, harmony, melodic variation, and the interplay between registers.

Bach's trio *Sonata BWV 1038* is enigmatic. While the surviving materiel is in



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Bach's handwriting, the source is unsigned and its authenticity regularly questioned. In four movements, this sonata in G major is inspired by the Italian style. This influence is even more visible in the **Andante BWV 974**, adapted from a work originally by the venetian composer Marcello for oboe and orchestra. Bach discovered the score and decided to transcribe it for his own instrument, the harpsichord.

Vivaldi's **Trio Sonata in D minor, Op. 1, No. 12, *La Follia***, is a masterpiece of the trio sonata repertoire, irresistible in its sheer momentum. The variations are built up impressively: by turns slow and fast, introspective and passionately fiery, they unfold organically with stylistic mastery, taking performers and listeners alike on a journey from intimacy to virtuosity.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Le Consort, the acclaimed Baroque chamber ensemble co-directed by harpsichordist Justin Taylor and violinist Théotime Langlois de Swarte, comprises four young musicians who interpret the trio sonata repertoire with enthusiasm, sincerity, and modernity. The group's mission is to bring together compelling musical personalities in the service of chamber music from the repertoire of the 17th and 18th centuries. From Corelli to Vivaldi, from Purcell to Couperin, the dialogue between the two violins and the basso continuo displays a wealth of contrasts between vocality, sensuality, and virtuosity. Le Consort takes this genre, the quintessence of Baroque chamber music, and interprets it with a personal, dynamic, and colorful language.

With a core that has remained constant since its founding in 2016, Le Consort performances approach a level of musical integration typically found in long-established string quartets. In 2017, the ensemble claimed First Prize and the Audience Prize at the Loire Valley International Early Music Competition, chaired by William Christie.

The group's recordings, including *Opus 1* (featuring the unpublished sonatas of Jean-François Dandrieu), and *Specchio Veneziano* (trio sonatas of Vivaldi alongside music of his less familiar contemporary, Giovanni Realì), have earned numerous awards and wide critical acclaim.

Le Consort's current North American debut tour features concerts in cities across the continent, including Montreal, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, Kansas City, La Jolla, and Vancouver. The ensemble has performed extensively throughout Europe, including at Radio France Auditorium and Louvre Auditorium (Paris); the Dijon Opera; the Deauville Easter Festival; the Arsenal in Metz; the MA Festival Brugge and in Antwerp de Singel (Belgium); the Pau Casals Foundation (Spain); and at the Misteria Paschalia Festival in Krakow (Poland). The musicians have also been featured on numerous broadcasts on France 3, France Musique, France Inter, and Radio Classique.

Le Consort is in residence at the Banque de France, the Singer-Polignac Foundation, and the Abbaye de Royaumont.