

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Fourth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

Washington Toho Koto Society
Traditional Japanese music
Presented in conjunction with the
National Cherry Blossom Festival
April 3, Sunday, 3:30
West Building, West Garden Court

Rose Ensemble
*American Roots: A Journey through
Our Country's Folk, Old-Time, and
Gospel Traditions.* Presented in honor
of *Three Centuries of American Prints
from the National Gallery of Art*
April 10, Sunday, 3:30
West Building, West Garden Court

Tamagawa University Taiko Group
Japanese Taiko drum and dance
In honor of the National Cherry
Blossom Festival
April 15, Friday, 11:00
East Building Atrium

PostClassical Ensemble
Music by Bernard Herrmann. Presented
in honor of *Three Centuries of American
Prints from the National Gallery of Art*
April 17, Sunday, 3:30
West Building, West Garden Court

Inscape
Music by Asian composers
April 24, Sunday, 3:30
West Building, West Garden Court

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art
and all of its programs is free of charge,
except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment
during the performance is not allowed.
Please be sure that all portable electronic
devices are turned off.

Concerts are made possible in part
through the generosity of donors to the
National Gallery of Art through The Circle.
Reserved seating is available in recognition
of their support. Please contact the
development office at (202) 842-6450 or
circle@nga.gov for more information.

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Cover Georges Braque, *Fruit, Glass, and
Mandolin* (detail), 1938, National Gallery of Art,
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

74TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

MARCH 27, 2016 • NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



PROGRAM



West Building, West Garden Court

Rachel Barton Pine, violin

2:00

Six Sonatas and Partitas

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Sonata no. 1 in G Minor, BWV 1001

Adagio

Fuga (Allegro)

Siciliana

Presto

Partita no. 1 in B Minor, BWV 1002

Allemanda — Double

Corrente — Double (Presto)

Sarabande — Double

Tempo di Borea — Double

Sonata no. 2 in A Minor, BWV 1003

Grave

Fuga

Andante

Allegro

3:30

Six Sonatas and Partitas

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Partita no. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004

Allemanda

Corrente

Sarabanda

Giga

Ciaccona

Sonata no. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005

Adagio

Fuga

Largo

Allegro assai

Partita no. 3 in E Major, BWV 1006

Preludio

Loure

Gavotte en Rondeau

Menuet I

Menuet II

Bourrée

Gigue

The Musicians

Heralded as a leading interpreter of the great classical masterworks, international concert violinist Rachel Barton Pine thrills audiences with her dazzling technique, lustrous tone, and emotional honesty. With an infectious joy in music-making and a passion for connecting historical research to performance, Pine transforms audiences' experiences of classical music. During the 2015–2016 season, Pine will perform concertos by Beethoven, Brahms, Bruch, and Vivaldi, with orchestras including the Santa Rosa Symphony, the New Mexico Philharmonic, and the Flagstaff, Windsor, and Gainesville Symphony Orchestras.

Pine recently celebrated the release of her debut album on Avie Records: *Mozart: Complete Violin Concertos, Sinfonia Concertante*, with conductor Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. In September 2015, Cedille Records released her recording of *Vivaldi: The Complete Viola D'Amore Concertos*, with Ars Antigua. Pine has appeared as soloist with many of the world's most prestigious ensembles, including the Chicago Symphony; the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic; and the Netherlands Radio Kamer Filharmonie. Her past festival appearances have included Marlboro, Wolf Trap, Vail, Ravinia, Davos, and Salzburg. She has worked with such renowned conductors as Charles Dutoit, Zubin Mehta, and Marin Alsop, and with such leading artists as Daniel Barenboim, Christopher O'Riley, and Mark O'Connor. She has collaborated with many contemporary composers including Augusta Read Thomas, John Corigliano, José Serebrier, and Mohammed Fairouz.

Pine has a prolific discography of thirty CDs on the Avie, Cedille, Warner Classics, and Dorian labels. She began an exploration of beloved violin concertos and the concertos that inspired them with *Brahms and Joachim Violin Concertos*, recorded with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Her *Beethoven & Clement Violin Concertos*, recorded with the Royal Philharmonic, offered the world premiere recording of Clement's *Violin Concerto in D Major*. She writes her own cadenzas to many of the works she performs, including for the Beethoven and Mozart concertos. In 2009, Carl Fischer published *The Rachel Barton Pine Collection* that includes original compositions, arrangements, cadenzas, and editions penned or arranged by Pine, making her the only living artist and first woman to join great musicians like Fritz Kreisler and Jascha Heifetz in Carl Fischer's Masters Collection series.

Program Notes

"You must practice Bach. It is the music of Gott!" Thus I was regularly instructed by the elderly German ladies at St. Paul's Church in Chicago, the church of my youth and my earliest years as a violinist.

I was fortunate to grow up at St. Paul's, a church with a deep dedication to music and a spiritual home to a number of opera singers and members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Oratorios, cantatas, and other choral works of the great classical composers are often performed as part of the service, and the music of Bach is celebrated above all others. The sanctuary itself features a stained glass window of Bach. I have vivid memories of spending Sunday mornings surrounded by the glorious sound of Bach's toccatas and fugues on the organ.

My relationship with Bach's music began and matured within St. Paul's sanctuary. A work of Bach was the first piece I played, at the age of four, for a worship service. I regularly shared portions of the *Six Sonatas and Partitas* for prelude or offertory, sat in an orchestra of professional musicians for full-scale Bach masses, and played obbligato lines for Bach's vocal works. A particularly special memory was joining, as an eleven-year-old, with fellow church members, Chicago Symphony's principal oboist Ray Still and principal bassist Joe Guastafeste, for Bach's oboe and violin concerto.

The *Sonatas and Partitas* are among the greatest human achievements, and I have always viewed them with the deepest reverence. However, remembering Bach's essential humility prevents these masterpieces from becoming overwhelming in their significance. Instead, each time I play them, I feel as though I'm conversing with the very best of friends.

The *Sonatas and Partitas* are full of technical challenges that must be overcome in order to bring out the harmonies and polyphonies. They require a highly refined technique of both the left and right hands. Clearly Bach was not only a genius composer and master keyboard player, but also a violin virtuoso of the first rank. The violin was most likely the first instrument he studied with his violinist father, Johann Ambrosius. His first professional jobs in Lüneberg and Weimar included significant duties as a violin player, and he continued to play the instrument throughout his life. Perhaps his esteem for the violin is reflected in the fact that the longest fugue he ever wrote was not for organ, harpsichord, or ensemble, but for unaccompanied violin (the Fuga of BWV 1005).

The *Six Sonatas and Partitas* are the culmination of an almost century-old tradition of multiple-voice writing for unaccompanied violin in Germany. Works by Thomas Baltzar, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber, Johann Paul von Westhoff, and Georg Pisendel serve as significant examples of this improvisatory and compositional practice with which Bach was intimately familiar.

Bach's autograph manuscript from Köthen is dated 1720, though some scholars believe Bach may have begun writing the *Sonatas and Partitas* as early as 1717. The title page includes the designation "Part 1," with Part 2 being the *Six Suites* for unaccompanied cello. The internal symmetry of the six violin works points to the composer's conception of them as a cycle, rather than a mere collection.

Each Fuga is increasingly longer and more complex. In contrast, the third movements of the *Sonatas* become ever sparer, dropping from three voices to two to primarily one. The *Partitas* increase in size from four movements to five to six. Their stylistic language follows a forward path, from the proto-seventeenth century's B minor to the High Baroque Italian of the D minor to the modern French style of the E major.

Bach's three sonatas are in *sonata da chiesa* (church sonata) form: slow-fast-slow-fast. Each pair of opening movements is an adagio and fugue, joined by an unresolved chord in the A minor and C major. The first movements of the G minor and A minor are covered in highly elaborate ornaments. The simpler ABA form of the G-minor Adagio gives us a wonderful opportunity to compare the different ornaments of the parallel first and last sections. The C-major Adagio is an entirely different concept, almost not a movement in its own right but rather an extended introduction, with a beginning that opens like a sunrise followed by a gradual unfolding of the music.

The subjects of the G-minor and A-minor Fugas are equally brief, but the G minor is much more compact in structure. This movement was my first insight into hearing beyond the violin in Bach's solo violin works; to my ears the organ with its variety of stops is often present, particularly in the pedal points of the coda. The more complex A-minor Fuga features a countersubject in a descending chromatic line and both themes in inversion. The C-major Fuga is a stunning masterpiece. The subject is taken from the chorale tune "Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herr Gott" (Come, Holy Ghost, Lord and God). Bach's inventive treatment of this theme includes major and minor, double fugue, stretto, inversion, and even burying the theme in single-voice eighth notes. The density of his polyphony uses as many as four voices, one per string. This is an unparalleled academic achievement, yet the result is a feeling of transcendence and ecstasy.

Each third movement is in a key that contrasts with the rest of the sonata. The lilting *Siciliana* conjures up a trio sonata, with a melodic bass line and two treble voices in duet. The two voices of the *Andante* have distinct roles, melody and accompaniment. The delicate *Largo* includes only the barest addition of a few harmony notes here and there. All of the last movements are single-voiced and in binary form, though with complex multi-voiced writing buried within, and numerous cross-rhythms. The A-minor *Allegro* has the most frequent use of written dynamics in Bach's cycle, with various echoes and a *subito piano* near the end. The brilliance of the C-major *Allegro assai* seems to suggest the E-major *Prelude* that follows.

The *Partitas* are suites of dance movements. Bach follows the standard Italianate sequence of *Allemande*, *Corrente*, *Sarabande*, and *Gigue* in his D-minor *Partita*, but deviates from it in the last movement of the B minor, substituting an intriguingly titled *Tempo di Borea*. (Perhaps this was a nod to Pisen del, whose earlier sonata had concluded with a *Giga* and *Variation*.) Despite the fact that none of these dances were meant to accompany actual dancing, Bach is often meticulous in his adherence to form, such as the tags at the end of each half of the *Allemandes* where the dancers would bow to each other.

Across the *Partitas*, Bach uses different spellings of the same movement titles to suggest stylistic differences. The B minor has the feel of an older aesthetic. Seventeenth-century influences include a *Sarabande*, which is flowing rather than lingering, and a variation of each movement in "division" style. Particularly in the outer movements, the affect is theatrical, evoking an orchestra accompanying dancers onstage rather than chamber music.

In contrast, the D-minor *Partita* has the more intimate feel of a single fiddler, or a few of them. The first four movements could form a suite of their own, but it turns out that they are leading up to one of the pinnacles of all music. Much has been written about the *Ciaccona* as a monumental showpiece, or a journey through the deepest emotions. The theory that Bach wrote it as a memorial to his first wife has been convincingly debunked, but we still continue to hope that perhaps it has some hidden, poignant extramusical meaning such as the crucifixion. Yet, the music need not justify itself beyond its notes and the emotions they portray. These thirty-four imaginative variations in three sections are grand, playful, peaceful, uncertain, triumphant, and tragic. Yet, somehow, Bach never loses the spirit of the dance.

The feeling that I always get from the E-major *Partita* is one of sheer happiness, capturing the delight of the fashionable French style without the fussiness. The *Gavotte*, often played as a stand-alone like the *Prelude*, is a rare instance of a *Rondo* movement in Bach's output. The elegant *Loure* and the first *Minuet* contrast with the rustic flavor of the *Bourée* and the musette-like second *Minuet*. Having lived and breathed the written-out ornaments of Couperin and Marais for many years, it felt natural to sprinkle some of these characteristic decorations onto Bach's pseudo-French dances. How wonderful that he concludes his entire cycle not with an emphatic statement but with a cute little *Gigue* that smiles and waves as it makes its lighthearted exit.

A note about the instrument: I began playing these works with a baroque bow at age fourteen, and since age eighteen, I have never played them with anything else. Whether paired with a baroque violin or with my primary concert violin in modern set-up, a modernized 1742 Guarneri del Gesù, the articulations and colors of the baroque bow enable me to more easily and effectively achieve my vision for Bach's music. I offer this performance to you in the spirit of Bach: *Soli Deo Gloria*.

Program notes by Rachel Barton Pine