

Christopher's Classics - Series XXVII 2022

presents

Strings Amore



Martin Riseley (violin), Rupa Maitra (violin), Margaret Gulborg (cello),
Sophia Acheson (viola), Donald Maurice (viola d'amore)

Music for the Viola d'Amore

Presented by
Sunday Classics Inc

Elizabeth Ball Trust



Wednesday, September 7th, 2022, 7:30 PM
The Piano, 156 Armagh St, Christchurch

The busiest lives deserve beautiful music.

This concert is presented in association with Chamber Music New Zealand.
The CMNZ In Partnership Series is supported by The Deane Endowment Trust Artist
Development Fund.

Programme

Antonio Vivaldi – *Concerto for viola d'amore in D major, RV 392*

- I. *Allegro*
- II. *Largo*
- III. *Allegro*

Georg Telemann – *Konzert for two violettas, TWV 52:G3*

- I. *Avec douceur*
- II. *Gai*
- III. *Large*
- IV. *Vif*

Christoph Graupner – *Concerto for viola d'amore in D major GWV 314*

- I. *Vivace*
- II. *Pizzicato*
- III. *Vivace*

Johann Sebastian Bach – *Concerto for violin in E major, BWV 1042*

- I. *Allegro*
- II. *Adagio*
- III. *Allegro assai*

Interval (15 minutes)

Christoph Graupner – *Concerto for viola d'amore and viola in A major, GWV 339*

- I. *Andante*
- II. *Moderato*
- III. *Largo*
- IV. *Allegro*

Georg Telemann – *for viola in G major, TWV 51:G9*

- I. *Largo*
- II. *Allegro*
- III. *Andante*
- IV. *Presto*

Johann Sebastian Bach – *Erbarne Dich, from St Matthew Passion*

(arr. Donald Maurice)

Programme Notes

Vivaldi's Concerto for viola d'amore in D major is probably his most performed solo work for this instrument. His mastery of bringing out the natural resonance of the played and sympathetic strings is evident immediately with the very first chord utilising all the open strings, and the clever leaping between registers with the high and low open D and A strings. The viola d'amore was one of the instruments Vivaldi taught at the Ospedale della Pieta in Venice during his time there. It is likely this concerto was written for the talented young virtuoso at the Pieta, Anna Maria.

Telemann's Konzert for two violettas in G major was composed in 1738, soon after a visit to France—each movement has a French title. In his day Telemann was one of the most popular German composers, as was demonstrated when he was the first choice for the prestigious role of director of music at St Thomas Church in Leipzig. The term violetta was used as an umbrella for a variety of string instruments including the viol, viola, violin, viola bastarda, viola da braccio, viola d'amore, violetta marina, and tromba marina. Instruments within this family contained anywhere from three to eight strings and some contained sympathetic strings.

Telemann's Viola Concerto in G major is the earliest known concerto for the viola, written around 1716–21. The slow-fast-slow-fast pattern of movements was the norm for many early baroque works with the fast-slow-fast pattern becoming popular with the concertos of Bach and Vivaldi. Telemann's Viola Concerto is in the repertoire of almost every violist and offers much scope for individual interpretation, especially with tempi, articulation and ornamentation, and opportunities for cadenzas in the two slow movements.

Graupner's Concerto for viola d'amore in D major and **Concerto for viola d'amore and viola in A major** are examples of the finest works ever composed for the viola d'amore. As well as the two concertos for viola d'amore and two for viola d'amore and viola, he composed several more combining solo viola d'amore with various combinations of wind instruments, some of which are no longer in common use, such as the chalumeau and the oboe d'amore. The music of Graupner eluded the great revival of baroque music in the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth century because it was locked away due to an unresolved dispute between the Graupner family and the court of the Landgrave of Darmstadt, his employer for most of his career. Graupner was a prolific and tireless composer. Though blind later in life, he produced an immense amount of music, with over 2,000 works, including eight Operas, 1,418 Sacred Cantatas, 24 Secular Cantatas, 113 Symphonies, 86 Overtures (Suites), 44 Concertos for one to four instruments, 66 Trio Sonatas, as well as keyboard music, including 41 Partitas for Harpsichord.

Bach's Violin Concerto in E major is the second of his two violin concertos and was composed while he was employed in Köthen between 1717-1723. During these six years he produced a great deal of instrumental music, especially notable being the Six Brandenburg Concertos, the Six Violin Sonatas and Partitas and the Six Cello Suites. The fast-slow-fast movement pattern for concertos had become the norm for this genre, leading into the classical era and remains to this day. A memorable feature of the slow movements of both Bach's violin concertos is the ostinato bass line over which the solo violin weaves sustained notes and elaborate ornamentation creating duets of much beauty. The Aria "**Erbarme Dich, mein Gott**" (Lord, have mercy), from St Matthew Passion, is scored for alto, solo violin and strings, it was described by Yehudi Menuhin as "the most beautiful piece of music ever written for the violin". In this performance the alto part is being performed on the viola d'amore.

The origin of the **viola d'amore** is unknown. In 1649 the musician Ritter from Hamburg wrote in a letter to Prince Wilhelm IV of "a Viole with five strings, which is called Viole d'amour to be used in a detuned manner, alongside a good viol da gamba". This early mention of the name Viola d'amore implies that instruments with the possibility of different tunings of the strings already existed. At the end of the 17th century, violas d'amore with six playing and six sympathetic strings were probably the norm, first described by D. Speer in 1687. Knowledge of sympathetic strings may have come to England through the trade routes from India. Seven-string instruments have been around since the beginning of the 18th century; they gradually pushed back the six-string instruments, which did not however disappear entirely. (International Viola d'Amore Society).

In 1723 St Thomas Church in Leipzig was seeking a new director of music. The post was first offered to George Telemann, who declined, and then it was offered to Christoph Graupner. That appointment was blocked by Graupner's employer, Ernst Ludwig, Margrave of Hesse-Darmstadt. The position was filled by Johann Sebastian Bach.

These three composers are often juxtaposed in concerts relating to St Thomas Church. Bach's most notable piece of writing for viola d'amore is the duo for two violas d'amore in his St John Passion. The only known works for viola d'amore by Telemann are the Concerto for flute, oboe d'amore and viola d'amore and the Trio Sonata in D major for flute, viola d'amore and continuo. It was Christoph Graupner and Antonio Vivaldi who became major champions of this instrument. Graupner wrote 48 works featuring the viola d'amore, and Vivaldi wrote seven concertos for viola d'amore and a double concerto for viola d'amore and lute.

Strings Amore brings together five of New Zealand's finest string players, and was established to perform baroque music on modern instruments with attention to performance practices of the eighteenth century, the height of the baroque era. In this programme there is a special focus on the viola d'amore and on four famous baroque composers who wrote for this unusual instrument.

Donald Maurice has recorded two CDs for Atoll playing viola d'amore and a CD and a full-length film in Poland on the Acte Prealable label. As a violist he has recorded 15 CDs as soloist and chamber musician. He is an Emeritus Professor of Music at Victoria University and a freelance musician. Donald is an honorary life member of the American Viola Society and the International Viola Society.

Martin Riseley is Associate Professor and head of strings at the New Zealand School of Music, and concertmaster of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. He has played as soloist with many orchestras and released numerous CDs. He was formerly the concertmaster of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and has been a guest concertmaster of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Rupa Maitra is a first violinist in Orchestra Wellington and was formerly principal second violinist in the Dunedin Sinfonia. She performs and records with guitarist Owen Moriarty in Duo Tapas, which has released two CDs. They have performed many concerts in Wellington, for Arts on Tour in New Zealand, and toured in China. Rupa has a Suzuki violin teaching studio in Wellington.

Sophia Acheson is principal violist of Orchestra Wellington, a casual player with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and she often performs as a soloist and in chamber music. She studied viola in Wellington, Barcelona and Texas. During her time in America, she furthered an interest in early music, learning the viola d'amore and viola da gamba, performing solo in both the USA and New Zealand.

Margaret Guldborg is originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico, and worked as a cellist and teacher in Boston, Denmark, and Malaysia until moving to Wellington in 2008. She plays with Orchestra Wellington and various chamber ensembles whilst maintaining a busy teaching schedule. Margaret holds a Master of Music in Performance from the New England Conservatory.

Christopher's Classics Next Concert:

Liam Wooding (piano)



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