

BACH & ERLEBACH

RESTORATION

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Sinfonia from Cantata BWV 196, *Der Herr denket an uns* **JS Bach**

Sinfonia from Cantata BWV 18,
Gleichwie der Regen und Schnee vom Himmel fällt **JS Bach**

Overture-suite for strings and continuo, no.6, G minor **PH Erlebach**

Overture
Entrée – Gavotte – Menuet & trio
Plainte
Bourrée – Gigue
Chaconne

Concerto for violin and strings, BWV 1042, E major **JS Bach**
solo violin: Lucinda Moon

Allegro
Adagio
Allegro

RESTORATION

Bronwen Pugh – baroque violin
Graham McPhail – baroque viola and baroque violin
Alison Salmons – baroque viola
Emma Goodbehere – baroque cello
Eric Scholes – violone
Robert Petre – harpsichord

with guest soloist, Lucinda Moon – baroque violin

July 2024
Webb's Gallery, Marion Street, Wellington

BACH and ERLEBACH

Johann Sebastian Bach, the best-known and best-loved composer of the high baroque, needs no introduction to music lovers today. Philipp Heinrich Erlebach, on the other hand, is almost unknown and his music very seldom heard. Yet in the late 17th and early 18th centuries he and his compositions were highly respected. He was born in 1657, almost 30 years before Bach, and aged only 24 was appointed Kappelmeister at the court at Rudolstadt, where he spent his whole career, composing over a thousand instrumental and vocal works. In a set of trio-sonatas published in 1694 he thanks his musical patrons and public for the great success of his 6 *Overtures* published the previous year. In his later years he was much sought after as a teacher – one of his students, JC Vogler, was also a student of JS Bach, and Erlebach is often cited as a forerunner and possible influence on Bach.

The tragedy of the posthumous neglect of Erlebach is no reflection on the quality of his compositions – it is solely on account of a catastrophic fire. After Erlebach's death in 1714 the Count of Rudolstadt acquired his manuscripts from his widow, but in 1735 they were all destroyed by a fire in the court library. It has been estimated that over 90 percent of his entire output was lost. The only works that have survived are the few pieces that had been published during his lifetime, including the set of six *Overtures nach französischer Art* [Overtures in the French style] of 1693, one of which we perform in this programme.

There are numerous similarities between the compositions of Erlebach and Bach – one of the most obvious is their use of the form of the French Overture-suite. Four of these orchestral suites by Bach are known to have survived, although it is likely he composed many more, which are now lost. One such has been recovered and reconstructed for performance by Restoration in our *Bach Restor'd* programme later this year.

Bach Sinfonias

Today's programme begins with the very short sinfonia to Bach's cantata 196, *Der Herr denkt an uns* (the Lord thinks of us), which provides a quiet and reflective prayer-like opening. The expressive dialogue between the two violins is echoed and supported in the lower strings above a classic Corellian 'walking bass' in C major.

The G minor Erlebach suite is introduced by another one-movement sinfonia from a Bach cantata, also in G minor. Cantata 18, *Gleichwie der Regen und Schnee vom Himmel fällt* (Just as the rain and snow falls from heaven) was composed early in Bach's career when he was employed in Weimar. When Bach later moved to Leipzig he revised the cantata and added higher-pitched recorders to the orchestra, but its original scoring was for four violas and continuo. This scoring emphasises the dark colours of Bach's depiction of a wintry storm – a recurrent motif of heavy strokes in unison for the downpour of rain, a more gentle effect for the swirling snow, then the two intermingling and building to a blizzard, followed by a repeat of the opening rainstorm music.

Erlebach: Overture-suite no.6, G minor

The form of the overture-suite was first established in France in the 17th century by the composer Lully at the court of Louis XIV, before being taken up and used by almost every composer and court throughout Europe, until late in the 18th century. The overture featured a majestic processional opening with grand gestures of sharply dotted rhythms and rapid flourishes, followed by a faster fugal section, and often a return to the processional music of the opening, as is the case with this work by Erlebach.

This overture movement was then followed by a series or suite of dances. These varied widely, depending on the fashions of the time and of the place where the performance occurred. In most cases, the music would have been played for the dancing itself at balls and other court occasions, and the style and tempo of these dances are determined in our performances by what we have learned today through extensive research and experience of the techniques and forms of baroque dance at the time.

Although he uses the standard dance forms of his time, Erlebach's music has an idiosyncratic and often quirky style that is quite distinctive. He seems to delight in unusual phrase-lengths and non-symmetrical structural details. For example, the final *Chaconne* in this suite is in 7-bar phrases throughout. The *Gigue* is even more unusual: the normal 4-beat phrase in the 1st violin is answered by a 5-beat phrase in the other parts; then a 7-beat phrase shaped 4+3 in the 1st violin but 3+4 in the lower voices; and finally this overlapping effect is abandoned so that all the parts join together, but in a 9-beat phrase (5+4) instead of the expected 8-beats (4+4).

But quirky structures are not Erlebach's only distinctive characteristic. His music is often melodically attractive and at times extremely expressive. He was a master at combining contrasting material – one commentator writes of his 'serious dialogues of profound lightness' and his 'tenderness blended with luminous majesty'. This suite in G minor does not include the customary slow dance, the sarabande – instead Erlebach has written a *Plainte*, a beautifully chromatic slow movement in triple time which exploits the full sonority of the five-part texture, interspersed with contrasting trio sections, and building to a peak of intensity before falling back to a sustained peaceful close. The music needs no words to achieve its expressive effect, but the similarity with the vocal complaints and laments set by Erlebach's close contemporary Henry Purcell is striking.

A note on instrumentation: all the works in this programme were composed for a five-part string ensemble, rather than the four-part texture that became standard later in the baroque and classical periods. This was another legacy of Lully at the court of Louis XIV, whose practices were imitated throughout Europe. There the parts were designated for a violin for the highest part (the *dessus*), then for three progressively larger sizes and lower tessituras of viola (*haut-contre*, *taille* and *quinte*), and the lowest the *basses* (bass violin, violone, and a chordal instrument such as a harpsichord, lute, or harp, improvising on the bass line). These are in fact the French terms that Erlebach used to label the parts for his Overtures, though they were written and performed in the heart of Germany. When the Italian fashion for the *concerto* took over in the 18th century, the *dessus* became the soloist, and the inner parts were taken by two violins and only one viola, as in the following work by Bach. In the baroque period, except for special grand occasions or very large venues, a work for 'orchestra' usually meant one instrument per part, as performed in this programme.

Bach: Violin concerto in E major

This concerto is one of Bach's most familiar works – from the bold statement of the three opening chords, to the sublime melismas of the slow movement, and the dance swing of the final movement. What more remains to be said of it? Perhaps most importantly that each of its three movements epitomizes Bach's consummate mastery of the rhetorical Italian manner, which is easily compromised by the interpretative excesses of tempi and style that are often heard in performances of this work. There is virtuosity aplenty in this music, which demands an extraordinary level of control and poise from the soloist particularly, but it is a virtuosity achieved by *sprezzatura* (the art of concealing the art) rather than overt display.

The first movement is in *da capo* or ternary form, where the joyful and declamatory opening section is repeated in full at the end. The magical middle section turns immediately to the relative C-sharp minor key with the soloist weaving descants and shimmering tremolos above intricate dialogues in the lower strings. This is interrupted by episodes of the opening music in a series of different keys, leading eventually to a high suspended tonic note and a short expressive cadenza before the *da capo* return.

The slow movement is built on a majestic ostinato figure played by the bass instruments. No autograph of this work has survived, and the earliest extant manuscript, a copy which dates from many years after Bach's death, has usually been misinterpreted in its placement of slurs, particularly in the slow movement. This has led in turn to a misinterpretation of semiquavers as essential melody rather than an ornamentation of the underlying slow-beating pulse. These slurs are absent in Bach's transcription of this concerto for harpsichord, which for once has survived in his own autograph score. A more inflected bass line provides a springboard for the solo violin's ecstatic flights of fantasy and intricate *foriture*.

The last movement is a *passepied* in rondo form. The *passepied* is a bright dance in triple time, a lighter but still recognizable relative of the minuet, and sharing many of the minuet's characteristics of noble elegance and sophisticated interplay of syncopation and cross-rhythm – all of which is lost at too fast a tempo. The rondo form means that the opening 16 bars are heard five times altogether, in between episodes in contrasting keys and styles – the first with continuo only, the second *senza bassi*, the third featuring double-stops, and the fourth adding a rippling dimension of demisemiquavers.

A note on the key: E major with its four sharps is the most extreme major key normally used in the baroque period, when tuning methods of unequal temperament (as used in our performances) mean that each key has its own particular colour, and more remote keys become so 'wild' they are usually avoided. Modern equal temperament tuning means that every key is equally usable, but none has a distinctive colour.

E major's particular colour was customarily used for celebratory occasions and for music designed to intrigue and please (C. Schubart ascribes 'noisy shouts of joy, laughing pleasure and delight' to E major). In this concerto, Bach's writing in E major means that the normal modulations to related keys, such as C sharp minor and F sharp minor, are highly coloured, and there are even short passages moving through more extreme keys with double sharps, such as D sharp major and G sharp minor, whose piquancy can only be intended to momentarily distract the ear.

RESTORATION

New Zealand baroque ensemble

Restoration is a group of musicians dedicated to exploring and bringing to life the music of the 17th and 18th centuries. We use historical instruments and playing styles to recreate the spirit of the baroque era, with its subtlety, flexibility, rhythmic energy and rhetorical inflections – a vivid and expressive language so different from that of our own time. The group's guiding principle is that this music speaks most directly to us with its original voice and inflections, and that modern audiences need no compromises to modern tastes and demands, to gain the greatest enjoyment and enlightenment from this window into the wonderfully foreign world of the past.

Restoration takes its name from that colourful era, the restoration of Charles II to the English throne in 1660 – the music of this time is central to the group's repertoire, which extends from Purcell, Bach and Handel, to Haydn and Mozart and beyond. The name also suggests the art-restorer's process of revealing the original colours and dramatic impact of a treasured art-work.

Restoration was founded by Bronwen Pugh and Robert Petre (with soprano Rosalind Salas) on their return to New Zealand in the 1980s from postgraduate study and professional experience overseas. They have worked since then with local baroque specialists and visiting artists from the UK, Europe, USA, and Australia, touring throughout New Zealand, recording for Radio NZ, teaching workshops, and performing in festivals including the NZ International Festival of the Arts. They and all the current members of Restoration have also been core members of NZ Barok, New Zealand's baroque orchestra based in Auckland. Restoration's recording of the complete *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* by Jean-Philippe Rameau was released to critical acclaim, and their CD, *Musick al'Italliana*, recorded in London for the Meridian label, was very well reviewed in both New Zealand and the UK.

Bronwen Pugh has worked with Sigiswald Kuijken over many years, first as a student in The Hague, and most recently at his masterclasses in Italy. Between 1990 and 2005 she was music director at Wendy Hilton's annual workshop in Baroque Dance and its Music at Stanford University, California.

Robert Petre studied harpsichord with Gerhard Kastner (Berlin) and Colin Tilney (Toronto), and has worked as a soloist and continuo player with many different ensembles in New Zealand. His edition of Purcell's *Harpsichord Master 1697* and articles on baroque music and dance have been published in London and Wellington, where he also teaches the harpsichord.

Graham McPhail studied with Sigiswald Kuijken in The Hague, and in turn has taught a new generation of baroque string players in New Zealand. He is a founder and co-director of NZ Barok, which he has led through its 17 years of concerts and recordings, and has been a long-standing member of Restoration.

Alison Salmons is New Zealand's foremost baroque viola specialist. As well as her work with NZ Barok she has performed with numerous ensembles and has been a member of Restoration since 1999. She runs a busy teaching studio in Auckland.

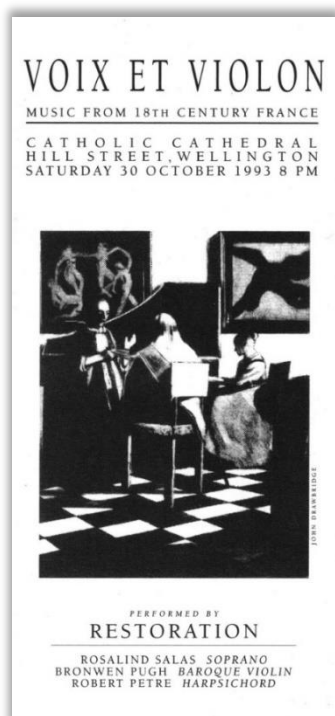
Emma Goodbehere studied baroque cello with Jaap ter Linden in The Hague, has been a concerto soloist with NZ Barok, and a member of Restoration since 2010. She runs a Suzuki Early Childhood Teaching programme, and is also Artist Teacher in baroque cello at Victoria University.

Eric Scholes studied double bass and violone at Auckland University and the Peabody Institute, Baltimore, and attended courses in Italy, Toronto and Amsterdam. He plays double bass and electric bass with a wide variety of ensembles including the Auckland Philharmonia and Auckland Chamber Orchestra.

Lucinda Moon is one of Australia's foremost baroque violinists. She was born in Wellington, the daughter of Donald Munro, founder of the NZ Opera Company, and Jean McCartney, violinist and viola player in the Alex Lindsay String Orchestra and other ensembles. The family moved to Australia, where Lucinda has since been based. After graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts, Lucinda studied baroque violin with Sigiswald Kuijken at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague. On her return to Australia, she was appointed concertmaster of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, which she led through its national and international concert series and numerous recordings from 1995 to 2008. She has performed with many Australian groups including the Elysium Ensemble, Adelaide Baroque, Salut! Baroque, Accademia Arcadia, Latitude 37 and Van Diemen's Band, and as musical director of Melbourne-based Genesis Baroque. She has also performed as guest concertmaster and soloist in New Zealand with NZ Barok and Restoration, in Canada with the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, and in Poland and the Netherlands with The Orchestra of the 18th Century.

Acknowledgements

Cover image: John Drawbridge *The Edge of Earth* (photo courtesy of the Drawbridge Estate)
 John Drawbridge *The Concert (Vermeer with Matisse)*, courtesy of the Drawbridge Estate
 John Drawbridge *Vermeer with Malevich* (Massey University collection) photo: Michael Roth



A note on the Drawbridge images

The late John Drawbridge is one of New Zealand's most significant and influential artists of the 20th century. His series of paintings and prints reworking images by 17th century European masters seems to us to resonate fittingly with our own work as New Zealand musicians exploring our heritage of 17th and 18th century European music. Both acknowledge the designs and techniques of the historical past and their influence on our art and culture in contemporary New Zealand. His abstract works also evoke the way colour, pattern and structure create their ineffable effect in music, particularly in the music of the baroque.

Restoration initially approached John Drawbridge in 1993 for permission to use his mezzotint *The Concert (Vermeer with Matisse)* in publicity material for our *Voix et Violon* programme. We are grateful to Cameron Drawbridge and Tanya Ashken for their assistance with this ongoing connection.

Cover design: Sue Hobbs, minimum graphics

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 Pub Charity
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Restoration's 2024 concert season
French *Art* and Italian *Gusto*

UPCOMING

BACH RESTOR'D

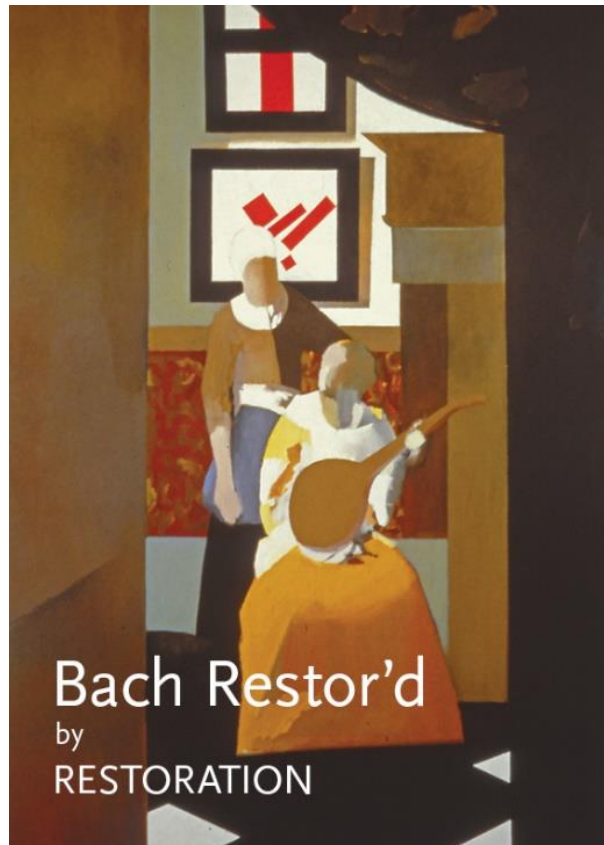
Two of Bach's best-known harpsichord works, the *Italian Concerto* and the *French Overture*, in Restoration's own reconstruction of the instrumental colours for which they may have been originally conceived; with some of the sumptuous music from Rameau's opera *Hippolyte et Aricie*.

In this programme the members of Restoration will again be joined by Lucinda Moon, one of Australia's foremost baroque violinists.

Saturday 21 September 2024, 7.30pm

Sunday 22 September 2024, 2pm

venue to be confirmed



Bach Restor'd
by
RESTORATION

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