



ACADEMY OF  
ANCIENT MUSIC

# AAM LIVE 2021

*Suonare è danzare:*

Laurence Cummings directs JS Bach,  
Telemann & Handel

Live from



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## ***Suonare è danzare:***

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<b>Muffat</b>	<i>Armonico Tributo</i> Sonata No.5 in G major
<b>JS Bach</b>	Sonata in E minor, BWV1023
<b>Telemann</b>	Concerto Polonoise in B-flat major
<b>Handel</b>	Sonata in G major, Op.5 No.4

<b>Bojan Čičić</b>	violin I
<b>Liz MacCarthy</b>	violin II
<b>Jane Rogers</b>	viola I
<b>Jordan Bowron</b>	viola II
<b>Sarah McMahon</b>	cello
<b>Judith Evans</b>	double bass
<b>William Carter</b>	theorbo
<b>Laurence Cummings</b>	director & harpsichord

**Georg Muffat (1653-1704)**

***Armonico Tributo* Sonata No.5 in G major**

Allemande | Adagio | Fuga | Adagio | Passacaglia

If you wanted to illustrate the sheer cosmopolitanism of the baroque musical world, Georg Muffat could serve as your poster boy. Born in the French Alps, he studied music in Paris and worked in Vienna and Prague before entering the employment of the Archbishop of Salzburg. There, he worked alongside the master-violinist Heinrich Biber – and was given leave, in 1681, to travel to Rome to study with the harpsichordist Bernardo Pasquini. There, he met Arcangelo Corelli, whose early *concerti grossi* he heard (as he later recalled) 'beautifully performed with the utmost accuracy by a great number of instrumentalists'.

Muffat's response was immediate: he composed five sonatas, incorporating all he knew of French dance music, German learning and the new style – by turns brilliant and songful – that he had discovered in Italy. They were performed at Corelli's house (where Corelli himself offered 'most gracious' advice), and when Muffat returned to Salzburg in 1682 they were printed as *Armonico Tributo*: his first published work. The fifth sonata, in which four shorter movements serve as prelude to a noble and expressive Passacaglia – 25 variations, simultaneously singing and dancing; *suonare è danzare* – crowns the whole set. The journeyman steps forward as a master.

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**

**Sonata in E minor for violin and keyboard, BWV1023**

Preludio | Adagio ma non tanto | Allemanda | Gigue

Johann Sebastian Bach must have been a first-rate violinist. According to his son Carl Philipp Emanuel, he 'played the violin from youth to old age with a pure and searching tone'.

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As CPE also pointed out:

*He had a complete grasp of the possibilities of every member of the violin family...One of the greatest violinists once told me that he had never seen anything more perfectly suited for becoming a good violinist.*

Few violinists today would dispute that. Bach immersed himself in the music of contemporaries ranging from Vivaldi to Biber, and his violin writing – whether accompanied or entirely solo – reveals an expertise born of a deep understanding of the violin's character and technique. When, or indeed if, Bach actually wrote this sonata is still uncertain: the earliest manuscript (which is not in Bach's hand) dates from 1730. But its brilliant, improvisatory introductory prelude, the searching Adagio that follows, and the two sophisticated but spirited dance movements that conclude the work are so characterful and arresting that even if they aren't unadulterated Bach, they're surely the work of a composer in the same class – and praise does not come higher than that.

### **Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)**

#### **Concerto Polonoise in B-flat major**

Polonoise | Allegro | Largo | Allegro

Georg Philipp Telemann's family didn't want him to become a musician: they feared (he recalled, in his autobiography) 'that I would end up as charlatan, tightrope walker, minstrel, or marmot trainer'. But he persevered, 'in a sort of innocent disobedience'. He cultivated friendships as lovingly as, in later life, he tended his garden of rare plants: Handel was a lifelong correspondent and Bach regarded Telemann so warmly that he made him godfather of his son Carl Philipp Emanuel (whose middle name is no coincidence).

During a six-month posting to Krakow between 1705 and 1707, Telemann discovered with delight the 'barbaric beauty' of Polish folk music. 'On one occasion I even heard thirty-six bagpipes and eight violins together' he wrote.

'One can hardly imagine the brilliant ideas the pipers and fiddlers brought forth ... If you were to write down everything they played, after a week you would have enough ideas for the rest of your life'. Some of those dance tunes surely found their way into this 'Polish Concerto' for strings: the unmistakable rhythmic kick of the opening polonaise infuses each of the three movements that follow with a rough-cut and thrillingly unpredictable energy.

**George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)**

**Sonata in G major, Op.5 No.4**

Allegro | A tempo ordinario – Allegro, non presto – Adagio | *Passacaille* | Gigue | Menuet

Handel never hesitated to recycle his own music. He was a busy man, after all: in the year 1739 he premiered *Israel in Egypt*, promoted two full concert seasons, and composed his twelve Concerti Grossi Op.6. Eighteenth century music survived only when performed or (less frequently) printed. An oratorio or opera might never be revived but its melodies didn't have to die with it. Incorporated into playable, affordable domestic music, they lost none of their magnetism.

So if Handel's Trio Sonatas Op.5, published at the end of February 1739 by John Walsh of Catherine Street, contain a certain amount of – well, let's call it creative repurposing - it's understandable. Op.5 No.4 contains not a single wholly original movement, and it's no less lively for it. The opening movements are based on music from the oratorio *Athalia* (1733), the Gigue is from the ballet *Terpsichore* (1734), and the Minuet from *Alcina* (1735). And the central passacaille – as if to remind us that the form originated (as Muffat also knew) as a graceful dance – is adapted from the ballet in *Radamisto* (1720). In short: it's a medley of West End hits from 18th century London's consummate song and dance man.

*Richard Bratby*

## Academy of Ancient Music

The Academy of Ancient Music (AAM) is an orchestra with a worldwide reputation for excellence in baroque and classical music. Using historically-informed techniques, period-specific instruments and original sources, we bring music vividly to life in committed, vibrant performances.

Established nearly 50 years ago to make the first British recordings of orchestral works using original instruments, AAM has released more than 300 albums to date, collecting countless accolades including Classic BRIT, Gramophone and Edison awards. We now record on our own-label AAM Records, and are proud to be the most listened-to period-instrument orchestra online, with over one million monthly listeners on Spotify.

Beyond the concert hall, AAM is committed to nurturing the next generation of musicians and music-lovers through our innovative side-by-side learning and participation initiative AAMplify. Working in collaboration with partners at the Guildhall School, London Music Masters, Cambridgeshire Music Hub and others we reach thousands of children and young people across primary, secondary and tertiary education each year.

AAM is Associate Ensemble at London's Barbican Centre and the Teatro San Cassiano in Italy; Orchestra-in-Residence at the University of Cambridge, The Grange Festival, Milton Abbey International Summer Music Festival and The Apex, Bury St Edmunds; and Research Partner to the University of Oxford.



## Laurence Cummings

director & harpsichord

© Robert Workman



Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance, both as a conductor and a harpsichord player. He is incoming Music Director of the Academy of Ancient Music, Artistic Director of the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen, Musical Director of the

London Handel Festival and Music Director of Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música in Porto. A noted authority on Handel, 'he now ranks as one of the composer's best advocates in the world' (*The Guardian*).

Praised for his compelling performances in both the opera house and concert hall, his career has taken him across Europe, conducting productions at the world's leading houses including Opernhaus Zurich, Theater an der Wien, English National Opera and orchestras including Academy of Ancient Music, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Hallé Orchestra and many more.

The William Crotch Professor of Historical Performance at the Royal Academy of Music, Laurence has recorded extensively on the Sony BMG, Harmonia Mundi, Naxos, and Accent labels, garnering considerable acclaim.

## Bojan Čičić

violin

© Nick Rutter



Croatian-born violinist Bojan Čičić specialises in repertoire ranging from the late 16th century to the Romantic era. Since 2018 he has been leader of the Academy of Ancient Music and has recently appeared as a soloist with the Kioi Hall Chamber Orchestra in Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and with Instruments of Time and Truth in

concertos by Mendelssohn and Beethoven.

His recording of JS Bach's Concerto for two violins with Rachel Podger was recently named the best available recording of the work by BBC Music Magazine. Bojan formed his own group, the Illyria Consort, to explore rare repertoire of the 17th and 18th centuries. Their debut recording of Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli's *Sonate da camera* (Nos. 1-6) achieved great critical acclaim and was chosen as one of Presto Classical's "Presto Recordings of the Year" for 2017.

In 2016 Bojan was appointed Professor of Baroque Violin at the Royal College of Music, and is passionate about training the next generation of instrumentalists in historically-informed playing styles. He lives in Oxfordshire with his wife and two children.

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