

JS Bach
Sonatas for
Viola da Gamba
and Harpsichord

Laura Vaughan
Elizabeth Anderson

move





Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

JS Bach Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord

Laura Vaughan

Elizabeth Anderson

1 Fugue in C major, BWV 952 1'41"

2 Fugue in C major, BWV 953 1'54"

Sonata no. 1 in G major, BWV 1027

3 Adagio 3'35"

4 Allegro ma non tanto 3'51"

5 Andante 2'32"

6 Allegro moderato 3'23"

Sonata no. 2 in D major, BWV 1028

7 Adagio 1'57"

8 Allegro 4'12"

9 Andante 4'47"

10 Allegro 4'29"

Sonata no. 3 in G minor, BWV 1029

11 Vivace 6'05"

12 Adagio 6'04"

13 Allegro 4'11"

Trio sonata no. 3 in D minor, BWV 527

14 Andante 4'59"

15 Adagio e dolce 5'08"

16 Vivace 4'16"



Considering the fame of Bach's solo violin partitas and his solo cello suites, it is remarkable how his sonatas for viola da gamba and keyboard remain in the shadows, at best, of most music-lovers' consciousness. The fact that some of the material in them originated elsewhere in Bach's output hardly explains the neglect in which they have tended to lie. After all, Bach had no qualms about wholesale recycling, as the overlap between his *Schübler Chorales* for organ and his cantatas demonstrates with special vividness.

More peculiar is the lack of information about when Bach's gamba music came to be created. Most experts maintain that the greater part of it dates from fairly early in Bach's life: specifically, from his six years (1717–23) as Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold of Cöthen. The prince's Calvinist adherence meant few if any chances for the Lutheran Bach to write sacred music, and therefore ensured that Bach devoted more energy to producing secular works than he generally did before or afterwards. On the other hand, British musicologist Keith Anderson has tentatively ascribed the gamba sonatas to the composer's Leipzig years (1723–50), which certainly involved Bach in providing various new instrumental pieces for the local university's Collegium Musicum. If we accept the Cöthen ascription as the correct one, then it is very likely that Bach intended the gamba parts to be played by his violist friend Christian Abel (1682–1761), who stayed in Cöthen after Bach left for Leipzig. (Abel's son and fellow violist, Carl Friedrich Abel, spent much of his career

in England, where he collaborated with Bach's own youngest son, Johann Christian Bach. It is possible that Carl Friedrich knew and played this music.)

Sonata in G major, BWV 1027

Adagio, Allegro ma non tanto, Andante, Allegro moderato

This sonata's first movement does represent Bach the recycler. Most of its melodic ideas can also be found in BWV 1039, for two flutes and continuo, though we do not know which piece came first (sometimes a higher BWV number means a later composition; usually it does not). The four-movement format of BWV 1027, taken from the structural pattern of the *sonata da chiesa* associated with Corelli and his Italian precursors, seemed old-fashioned in Bach's day. By choosing it, Bach could well have envisioned a gesture of conservative defiance. During the early eighteenth century the more succinct, fast-slow-fast, three-movement template associated with Vivaldi had become standard. Alone among the gamba sonatas, BWV 1027 survives in the composer's own manuscript, which, interestingly, bears the legend *Sonata a Cembalo e Viola da Gamba*. The word-order indicates that Bach regarded the keyboard part as fully matching, if not surpassing, the gamba part in its importance.

Sonata in D major, BWV 1028

Adagio, Allegro, Andante, Allegro

Another four-movement act of homage to the *sonata da chiesa* style, BWV 1028 is sprightlier

than its predecessor. We know of it purely by chance, thanks to a Bach student named Christian Friedrich Penzel, associated with Leipzig's Thomasschule from 1751 (the year after Bach's death), who took the trouble to copy out both this work and BWV 1029 for the benefit of later generations. The centrepiece of BWV 1028 is the long and poignant *Andante* in B minor, exhibiting the distinctive rhythm of a *siciliana*, and less marked than the other movements by imitation between violist and keyboard player.

Sonata in G minor, BWV 1029

Vivace, Adagio, Allegro

Here the three-movement Vivaldian format comes into its own; and as a consequence, the music is generally more modern-sounding, courtlier, than that of the other two sonatas. American broadcaster Pat Marriott has called BWV 1029 "one of Bach's minor masterpieces, displaying the kind of structural perfection in a multi-movement piece that Bach learned from Vivaldi, and that has been emulated by everyone since. The first movement, *Vivace*, reminds one of the *Third Brandenburg Concerto* and the extent and excellence of development are remarkable for such a small-scale work. ... Finally, the *Allegro* finale is pure Bach, with two thematic subjects developed both separately and in combination, through different keys and breathtaking interplays of syncopation, to produce a hugely satisfying whole." Separating the *Vivace* from the *Allegro* is a remarkably songful *Adagio* in the relative major key (B flat), which would not sound

out of place in one of Bach's Passion settings, possessing as it does an eloquence and unforced profundity exceptional even by Bach's own criteria.

Two Fugues in C major, BWV 952 and 953

In the BWV catalogue of Bach's output, the numbers from 944 to 962 come under the somewhat vague classification "Fugues and Fughettas." As for 952, its origins are unclear: so unclear, indeed, that some experts have refused to give Bach the credit for writing it. New-York-based musicologist David Schulenberg, in his comprehensive 2013 study *The Keyboard Music of J.S. Bach*, roundly dismisses such theories of incorrect attribution: "It [952] is remarkably similar to BWV 953 in structure; both, for example, reach a cadence in E minor in measure 23 ... But in BWV 953 the pedal note takes the form of eighths [quavers] separated by rests. This is one of several hints that BWV 953 might be the latest of the three pieces [the third being BWV 870a], although its counterpoint is initially very simple, accompanying the subject with chords in a way that one imagines was typical of improvised fugues."



Trio Sonata in D minor, BWV 527 (originally for organ) – Andante, Adagio e dolce, Vivace

All six of Bach's *Trio Sonatas* for organ are thought to date from around 1727. It seems likely that they were intended for the challenge and entertainment of the composer's eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, who was a masterly organist. The *Adagio e dolce* is a rare use of a qualifying adjective by this composer, who usually stuck to basic speed indications for his titles. So far as can be determined, this

CD marks the first time that BWV 527 has been recorded with a gamba taking one of the melodic lines. But given Bach's own enthusiasm for deliberately blurring the boundaries between keyboard writing and string writing – whether the music in question be his own, Vivaldi's, Albinoni's, whoever's – it is hard to imagine any grounds upon which he or any of his contemporaries could have objected to the transcription presented here.

NOTES © 2015 RJ STOVE

Elizabeth Anderson plays a double-manual harpsichord by Jürgen Ammer (2009), after the single-manual anonymous Thuringian instrument (c.1715) in the Bach House, Eisenach.

Laura Vaughan plays a bass viol by Henner Harders (2007) after Michel Colichon (1691) on tracks 3-13 and a tenor viol by Dietrich Kessler (1973) on tracks 1-2 and 14-16.

Cover photo: Albert Comper Photography
Recorded and edited at Move Records studio
by Vaughan McAlley

© 2016 Move Records ... move.com.au

Melbourne-based viola da gamba specialist Laura Vaughan is a dynamic and well-recognised member of the early music movement in Australia. Following her studies with Miriam Morris at Melbourne University and with Wieland Kuijken and Philippe Pierlot at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, she has established an active performing career encompassing a wide range of solo and chamber repertoire across Australasia.

Passionate about the unique sound world of the viol, Laura is committed to bringing its exquisite and addictive repertoire to audiences wherever she can. She teaches at Melbourne University and is also one of the few exponents of the lirone.

Laura has a particular love of 17th century repertoire and records regularly for ABC Classic FM as a soloist and chamber musician, also appearing on numerous CD recordings. She performs with most major early music ensembles within Australia, including the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Orchestra of the Antipodes, Adelaide Baroque, Auckland Philharmonia, Orchestra Victoria, Song Company, Accademia Arcadia and is a founding member of the multiple ARIA award nominated trio Latitude 37.





Elizabeth Anderson teaches harpsichord at the Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne, where she completed a Masters degree under Roger Heagney and John O'Donnell. She furthered her studies in Italy with Colin Tilney and Alan Curtis. Each year she undertakes an international concert tour, performing as a harpsichord soloist, in four-hands organ recitals with husband, Douglas Lawrence or with the Australian Chamber Choir. She has appeared as a soloist in many international festivals, including the City of London Festival, the Leeds International Festival, the Dublin Early Music Festival, the Vendsyssel Festival and the Sorø International Muic Festival (Denmark).

In Australia she has appeared as a soloist with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the Sydney Opera and Ballet Orchestra, the Queensland Orchestra and Orchestra Victoria and as a principal artist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Queensland Orchestra, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. She can be heard regularly playing basso continuo in the Bach Cantata series at St Johns' Lutheran Church, Southbank.

Elizabeth Anderson can be heard on the Move and Naxos labels. Her *Goldberg Variations* (Move MD 3160) won a Listener's Choice award from Soundscapes magazine and appeared in The Age newspaper's top 10 new CDs.