

# WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 17 September 2024  
7.30pm

## Courtly Love

Daniel Pioro violin  
Liam Byrne viol  
Jonas Nordberg lute

Nicola Matteis Jr  
Marin Marais (1656-1728)  
Nicola Matteis  
John Jenkins (1592-1678)

Robert de Visée (c.1655-1732)

Nicola Matteis

Fantasia in A minor for solo violin (by 1720)  
Tombeau pour Monsieur de Lully (pub. 1701)  
Variations on *La Folia*  
Prelude for solo viol  
Fantasy Suite in A minor  
*I. Fantasia • II. Air • III. Corant*  
Suite in A minor for solo lute  
*I. Prelude • II. Allemande • III. Chaconne*  
Prelude in G (pub. c.1679)

### Interval

Cipriano de Rore (c.1515-1565)  
Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770)

Dieterich Buxtehude (c.1637-1707)

Robert de Visée

John Eccles (1668-1735)  
Carl Friedrich Abel (1723-1787)  
Nicola Matteis

Ancor che col partire (pub. 1547)  
Violin sonata in G minor 'The Devil's Trill' (pub. 1799)  
*I. Larghetto affettuoso • II. Allegro • III. Andante - Allegro*  
Trio Sonata in F BuxWV265 (pub. 1696)  
*I. Adagio • II. Allegro • III. Lento • IV. Vivace • V. Largo • VI. Allegro*  
Tombeau des Mesdemoiselles de Visée from  
Suite in C minor for solo lute  
Aire V from *The Mad Lover* (c.1700)  
Vivace for solo viol (c.1770)  
Diverse bizzarie sopra la Vecchia Sarabanda ò pur  
Ciaccona (pub. 1676)

Cassandra Miller (b.1976)

Daylonging, Slacktide (2020)

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As the church declined in influence in medieval Europe, its place was taken as a sponsor of art by the court. Music, painting and poetry now served secular ends – courtship, for instance. Music became the food of love, especially courtly love.

Musicians travelled between courts in search of work. The Matteis family of violinists left Naples for London after puritan austerity was replaced by a restored king and a revived court. **Nicola Matteis Jr**, whose violin *Fantasia* begins the programme, was born here but made his career in Vienna's imperial court composing operas and ballets. His father, also **Nicola**, remained in Britain, flattering the aristocracy by allowing them to accompany him at the keyboard. His improvisations – written out in the *La Folia* variations – were legendary. 'He played such ravishing things on a ground as astonished us all,' the diarist John Evelyn noted in 1674.

The French court of Louis XIV employed **Marin Marais**, a virtuoso on the bass viol who introduced the trio sonata to France and wrote much music for the present combination of violin, viol and basso continuo. Lully taught him composition and his love for his teacher and grief at his passing is evident in the *Tombeau*. This was a popular form of composition and Marais's colleague at court **Robert de Visée**, lutenist and singer, featured one as a movement in his solo lute Suite in C minor. The identity of the 'Medsemoiselles', the plural dedicatee of this tombeau, is unknown but intriguing. Visée composed several suites for his own instrument in its Baroque incarnation, tuned to a minor chord. Later he took up the guitar, and by the end of his career was Maître de Guitare du Roi to The Sun King.

**John Jenkins** thrived in Stuart England and won the praise of Charles I after performing on the viol in the 1634 masque *The Triumph of Peace*. 'He did wonders on an inconsiderable instrument,' the King pronounced. In the Civil War he kept out of the way as an employee of royalist families in rural Norfolk, composing *In nomines*, an old-fashioned form, and both this *Prelude for solo viol* and the *Fantasy Suite*. Under Charles II he was retained as a court musician and although, being elderly, he was often unable to attend, he received his salary anyway, such was the respect his colleagues showed him. He set the religious poetry of George Herbert and was 'pious reticent and private'. He 'knew no want, saw himself outrun by the world and, having lived a good Christian, died in peace,' summarised Roger North, the writer and musician.

The 16th-century Flemish composer **Cipriano de Rore** made his career in various aristocratic Italian courts, particularly Ferrara and Parma. He wrote madrigals, including his most popular four-part song 'Ancor che col partire', which was used as the basis for variations, adaptations and ornamentations as here.

The Italian violinist **Giuseppe Tartini** worked for the Bohemian court in Prague in the employment of Count Kinsky and played as a soloist at the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI in 1723. He wrote that his 'Devil's Trill' Sonata resulted from attempts to recapture what he'd heard the devil play in a dream. It remained in manuscript until 1799 when it was printed in a teaching manual long after Tartini's death.

Danish composer **Dieterich Buxtehude** was organist of the Marienkirche in Lübeck. In 1705 he was giving concerts to commemorate the death of the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I and the accession of Joseph I when JS Bach visited him. He wrote much but published little, apart from two sets of trio sonatas in the 1690s. BuxWV265 dates from 1696 and has a figured bass part, here played by the lute. Its six short movements end with a spirited *ostinato* over a repeating bass line.

The Eccles family produced generations of English musicians, the best known of whom was **John Eccles** who was appointed Master of the King's Musick in 1700 and as such composed odes for the sovereign's birthday and New Year's Day. He was also a theatre composer, and wrote incidental music for *The Mad Lover*, a strangely surreal drama in which music both depicts and cures depression (or madness). It features a masque with dancing animals and trees, and was staged at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields in the year of Eccles's royal elevation.

The German composer and viol player **Carl Friedrich Abel** made his career in Britain alongside JC 'London' Bach (son of JS) from 1763. They established the first subscription concerts and were appointed chamber musicians to Queen Charlotte in 1764, positions they kept for life. Abel looked after Mozart when the child prodigy came to London. The boy copied out one of his mentor's symphonies and it was believed to have been Mozart's work for many years. Abel's obituary in *The Morning Post* noted that his instrument was no longer much played and that it may die with him.

The viol did not die, but lay dormant until the 20th Century when, with the lute, its revival was part of the Early Music movement in the 1960s. The concert ends with a piece about the longing to reconnect and the experience of time stood still by Canadian **Cassandra Miller**, former head of composition at the Guildhall conservatoire. *Daylonging, Slacktide* was written as a lockdown commission in 2020 for solo viola and voice. Originally the violist was also the vocalist but here, transcribed for violin, a separate singer takes the stage. The lyric consists solely of the numbers one to 24, the hours in a day.

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