

Chamber Music Raleigh presents  
**Mallarmé Chamber Players**  
North Carolina Museum of Art – Sunday, March 13, 2022

Jeanine Wynton - violin  
Suzanne Rousso - viola  
David Meyer - cello  
Jaren Atherholt - oboe  
Jennifer Streeter - harpsichord

J.S. Bach - Sonata in C Minor for violin and harpsichord, BWV 1017

I. Largo  
II. Allegro  
III. Adagio  
IV. Allegro

Joseph Bologne - Quartet in G Minor for harpsichord and strings

I. Allegro  
II. Rondò (Maggiore – Minore)

W.A. Mozart – Divertimento in E-flat Major for string trio, K. 563

I. Allegro,  
II. Adagio,  
VI. Allegro

Benjamin Britten - Six Metamorphoses after Ovid for solo oboe, Op. 49

I. Pan  
II. Phaeton  
III. Niobe  
IV. Bacchus  
V. Narcissus  
VI. Arethusa



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**ELIZABETH AFFELDER KAHN**

September 3, 1943 - September 24, 2021



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## Mallarmé Chamber Players –Program Notes – March 13, 2022

### **Sonata in C minor, BWV 1017 For Violin & Harpsichord**

Johann Sebastian Bach  
1685-1750

Little of Bach's massive output was published during his lifetime. Fortunately, many authentic autographs (manuscripts in the composer's own hand) are still extant, and many of the unpublished compositions, especially the chamber works, were greatly prized by his sons and other musicians, surviving in numerous manuscript copies by Bach's students, some of which include sections in Bach's own hand.

The small principality of Anhalt-Cöthen was the penultimate stop in Bach's career. There, he was expected to produce music for court entertainment, rather than sacred cantatas and organ music, which were not a part of the Calvinist service. Most of Bach's extant secular music, including the Brandenburg Concertos, comes from his years at Cöthen, although many of these works – including parts of the Brandenburg's – were actually reworkings of earlier compositions.

We do not know the circumstances surrounding compositions of the Violin and Harpsichord sonatas, but it is likely that they were composed for Bach's employer, Prince Leopold, who was a talented musician on both instruments. Nevertheless, Bach was obliged to seek employment elsewhere after Prince Leopold married a woman with apparently no sensitivity to music.

Bach's surviving violin sonatas fall into two groups. Six (BWV 1014-1019) are for violin and obbligato harpsichord, in which the harpsichordist has a fully notated part. The other group is in the more traditional form, in which the harpsichord plays a *basso continuo* (a bass part notated with a bass note and numbers indicating which harmonies to play in coordination with the violin part). *Continuo* notation also directs the keyboard player to improvise around the given harmonic structure.

BWV 1017 is written in the old *Sonata a chiesa* (Church Sonata) style, a four-movement form in a slow-fast-slow-fast pattern. The relationship between the keyboard and violin parts is contrapuntal, thereby giving an equal role to both instruments. Later, Classical, duo sonatas for flute or violin and keyboard emphasized the keyboard, utilizing the other instrument as an accompaniment. Only with Mozart and early Beethoven did the two instruments regain an equal partnership.

### **Harpsichord Quartet in G minor**

Joseph de Bologne  
1745-1799

Composer, violinist, conductor and master fencer Joseph Bologne, *Le Chevalier de Saint Georges*, was the son of a wealthy French businessman living in Guadeloupe and his young slave of African descent named Nanon. The father got into trouble with the law for killing a man in a drunken brawl and went into hiding. His wife, the three-year-old Joseph – and Nanon – left Guadeloupe for France, where family influence obtained a pardon for the father from Louis XV, enabling the family to return to their plantation.

From age eight, Joseph lived and was schooled in France. At 13 he entered a fencing academy, an elite boarding school for the sons of the aristocracy. Mornings at the academy

consisted of classes in mathematics, history, foreign languages, music, drawing and dance, while the afternoons were devoted to the most important subject, fencing. He quickly became known as the finest swordsman in Europe and at 17 was appointed an officer of the King's Guard. From then on, he was known as *Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges*, and in the world of fencing as "the god of arms." He also became a master swimmer and overall athlete.

In his spare time, he also studied music, becoming an accomplished composer, violinist and harpsichordist. By age 27 he premiered his first two violin concertos. He composed string quartets, *symphonies concertantes*, symphonies and ballets. He started conducting – a “natural” career move for a musical swordsman – but ran into racial prejudice when he tried to get the directorship of the Paris Opéra.

In 1787 Bologne conducted the *Concert de la Loge Olympique* in the premiere of Haydn's six “Paris” Symphonies, Nos. 82-87. After the Revolution, he became a captain in the National Guard in Lille. Promoted to colonel, he chose his friend, Alexandre Dumas, also the son of a French aristocrat and an African slave, as his assistant. Dumas's son and grandson became famous French novelists.

But the upheavals of the Terror and its aftermath derailed Bologne's career, and in 1796 he left France for the West Indies, returning to Paris and to a conducting job in 1797, where he died two years later of a bladder infection.

The date of composition of the two-movement keyboard quartet is unknown; it exists in a different version as a string quartet, Op. 1/3, which was probably the first version.

### **Divertimento for String Trio in E-flat major, K. 563 Movements I, II and VI**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
1756-1791

Johann Michael Puchberg would not even merit a footnote in history today, were it not that he was Mozart's fellow Freemason and a generous contributor to the bottomless pit of Mozart's finances. Between 1787 and 1791 he lent(!) him over 1400 florins (a fortepiano cost 900 florins). Mozart, who was seldom able to repay loans, showed his thanks and appreciation by dedicating to Puchberg the six-movement Divertimento for String Trio K. 563, one of his most profound and deeply moving compositions. It was completed in September 1788 and premiered the following April with Mozart himself playing the viola.

The *divertimento*, an instrumental composition written in a light vein and meant primarily for background entertainment, was popular in the 18th century, especially in Austria. The term covered an enormous variety of forms but usually referred to compositions for small ensembles consisting of three to ten relatively short movements. Some of these movements were modeled after the sonata while others were dances, marches or variations. Haydn used the term in his younger years for the forerunner of what later became known as the string quartet. Mozart wrote over 35 works which he called *divertimenti* for many occasions and in many forms, ranging from playful childhood pieces to the Divertimento K. 563.

In this work, Mozart mastered the writing for a string trio, a spare and difficult instrumental medium, but he used it for no other major composition. He treated the three instruments as equals although he gave his own instrument, the viola, some of the choicest passages. The three movements here selected fit into the Classical three-movement string trio structure (Allegro-Adagio-Allegro).

## *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid, Op. 49*

Benjamin Britten  
1913-1976

Composer, pianist and conductor, Benjamin Britten was one of the musical prodigies of the last century. By age 12 he had already composed six string quartets, ten piano sonatas, numerous suites of piano pieces and songs. From age 13 he spent his summer vacations as a composition student of noted composer and pianist Frank Bridge and at 17 was accepted as a student at the Royal College of Music in London.

While Britten did not quite fulfill his mother's fantasy that he become the fourth B, he is unquestionably the single most important British composer of the twentieth century. His fame rests mostly on his vocal works, including over a dozen each of operas, cantatas and song cycles. He incorporated into his music an extended tonality that has made it both dramatic and accessible. He had the gift of adapting his style to the forces for which he was writing, whether they were seasoned opera singers or children's choruses – all without compromising his artistic standards.

A life-long pacifist, Britten left for Canada in the spring of 1939, staying there for the first three years of World War II. In 1942, however, he returned home to do his share for the country's morale, composing scores for concerts, radio dramatizations and films.

*Metamorphoses* is the *magnum opus* of the surviving Roman literature. Finished by Ovid (43 BC to 17 AD) in 8 AD, it is a nearly 12,000-line poem, divided into 15 books. It describes the world in mythological terms from the creation to Julius Caesar.

Britten composed the *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid* in 1951, dedicated to oboist Joy Boughton. She premiered it at the Aldeburgh Festival that year. Each movement is a characterization of a mythological figure from Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses*:

1. *Pan*, "who played upon the reed pipe, which was Syrinx, his beloved."
2. *Phaeton*, "who rode upon the chariot of the sun one day, and was hurled into the river Padus by a thunderbolt."
3. *Niobe*, "who, lamenting the death of her fourteen children, was turned into a mountain."
4. *Bacchus*, "at whose feasts is heard the noise of gaggling women's tattling tongues, and shouting out of boys."
5. *Narcissus*, "who fell in love with his own image and became a flower."
6. *Arethusa*, "who, flying from the love of Alpheus the river god, was turned into a fountain."

Program notes by:  
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