

Sunday, October 23, 2022, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Rachell Ellen Wong, violin
Coleman Itzkoff, cello
David Belkovski, harpsichord

The Grand Tour

- Heinrich Ignaz Franz von BIBER Violin Sonata No. 5 in E minor, C. 142 (1681)
(1644–1704)
- Johann Sebastian BACH (1685–1750) Violin and Harpsichord Sonata in A major,
BWV 1015 (1717–1723)
[without indication]
Allegro
Andante un poco
Presto
- Francesco Maria VERACINI (1690–1768) Violin Sonata Accademiche in D minor,
Op. 2, No. 12 (1744)
Passagallo: Largo assai e come stà,
ma con grazia
Capriccio cromatico con due soggetti
e loro Rovesci: Allegro ma non presto
Adagio
Ciaccona: Allegro ma non presto

INTERMISSION

- Giuseppe TARTINI (1692–1770) Violin Sonata in G minor, Bg. 5, *Il trillo
del Diavolo*, arr. for solo violin (ca. 1740)
III. Andante - Allegro
- Joseph-Nicolas-Panrace ROYER *La Marche des Scythes*, for solo harpsichord
(1703–1755) (1746)
- Jean-Marie LECLAIR (1697–1764) Violin Sonata in D major, Op. 9, No. 3,
Tambourin (ca. 1743)
Un poco andante
Allegro – Adagio
Sarabande. Largo
Tambourin. Presto
- Arcangelo CORELLI (1653–1713) Violin Sonata in D minor, Op. 5, No. 12,
La Folia (1700)

*This performance is made possible, in part, by Nadine Tang
and an Anonymous patron sponsor.*



Jeremy Geffen

I couldn't be happier to welcome you to this, one of the first programs of Cal Performances' remarkable 2022–23 season. This month, we look forward to visits from gifted classical artists like violinist **Maxim Vengerov** and pianist **Polina Osetinskaya**; Baroque violinist **Rachell Ellen Wong** and her partners, cellist **Coleman Itzkoff** and harpsichordist **David Belkovski**; and harpsichordist and fortepianist **Kristian Bezuidenhout**. We'll also welcome our own **San Francisco Symphony** back to UC Berkeley in a special concert especially appropriate for the Halloween season and featuring music director **Esa-Pekka Salonen** and piano soloist **Bertrand Chamayou**; as well as the brilliant **Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan** with its breathtaking production of *13 Tongues*. I'm proud to launch the season with programming that represents the finest in dance and classical music.

But this is just the start! From now until May 2023—when we close our season with the Bay Area premiere of Octavia E. Butler's powerful folk opera *Parable of the Sower* and a highly anticipated recital with international dramatic soprano sensation **Nina Stemme**—we have a calendar packed with the very best in the live performing arts.

And what a schedule! More than 70 events, with highlights including the return of the legendary **Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra** under conductor **Christian Thielemann** (in his Bay Area debut); the beloved **Mark Morris Dance Group** in Morris' new *The Look of Love: An Evening of Dance to the Music of Burt Bacharach*; the US premiere of revered South African artist **William Kentridge**'s astonishing new *SIBYL*; and a special concert with chamber music superstars pianist **Emanuel Ax**, violinist **Leonidas Kavakos**, and cellist **Yo-Ma**. And these are only a few of the amazing performances that await you!

Illuminations programming this season will take advantage of Cal Performances' unique positioning as a vital part of the world's top-ranked public university. In the coming months, we'll be engaging communities on and off campus to examine the evolution of tools such as musical instruments and electronics, the complex relationships between the creators and users of technology, the possibilities enabled by technology's impact on the creative process, and questions raised by the growing role of artificial intelligence in our society.

This concept of "Human and Machine" has never been so pertinent to so many. Particularly over the course of the pandemic, the rapid expansion of technology's role in improving communication and in helping us emotionally process unforeseen and, at times, extraordinarily difficult events has made a permanent mark on our human history. Throughout time, our reliance on technology to communicate has—for better and worse—influenced how we understand others as well as ourselves. During this *Illuminations* season, we will investigate how technology has contributed to our capacity for self-expression, as well as the potential dangers it may pose.

Some programs this season will bring joy and delight, and others will inspire reflection and stir debate. We are committed to presenting this wide range of artistic expression on our stages because of our faith in the performing arts' power to promote empathy. And it is because of our audiences' openness and curiosity that we have the privilege of bringing such thought-provoking, adventurous performances to our campus. The Cal Performances community wants the arts to engage in important conversations, and to bring us all together as we see and feel the world through the experiences of others.

Please make sure to check out our brochures and our website for complete information about upcoming events. We can't wait to share all the details with you, in print and online.

Welcome back to Cal Performances!

Jeremy Geffen
Executive and Artistic Director, Cal Performances



The Grand Tour

It was an earlier era's version of a gap year, a time for a young person to cut loose for a while and see something of the world. Practiced mostly by well-heeled European and American males, the idea was to soak up some culture and hopefully slough off a layer or two of provincialism. The route typically wound southwards through Germany and Austria; whether France was on the itinerary depended on the political winds. Americans usually spent a goodly time in England. For just about everybody, Italy was the ultimate destination and the overriding reason for the entire tour. Naturally, it wasn't all museums and sightseeing and concerts and theater-going, although those played a part. A Grand Tour was really all about *people*—people with different notions or customs or traditions or opinions than one's own, people to watch, people to meet, people to become friends or lovers, people to admire, people to emulate, people to avoid.

This program traces out a musical Grand Tour, mostly centered in Italy in the early 18th century, but with significant side trips to Germany, Austria, and France. More specifically, this is a *violinist's* Grand Tour, emphasizing works by the finest violinists of the era.

Heinrich Biber

Violin Sonata No. 5 in E minor, C. 142

Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber doesn't usually come immediately to mind when thinking about eminent mid-Baroque composers: one tends to gravitate towards Arcangelo Corelli or perhaps Henry Purcell. But Biber easily belongs in their company. An artist of the highest quality, he distinguished himself both as an über-virtuoso violinist and as a composer of extraordinary breadth and fertility. Nowadays, after several centuries of neglect, Biber has been receiving his due.

Biber's violin sonatas are likely to surprise those who associate Baroque music with the elegant suavity of Corelli. He explored the vi-

olin's technical capabilities at an unprecedented level and wrote accordingly. The sonatas tend towards the fantastical and showy; they are filled with flamboyant display and many require *scordatura*, unusual string tunings that make otherwise unplayable chords or passagework possible. This particular sonata eschews *scordatura* but imposes quite substantial technical demands on its performers.

After a luxuriantly improvisatory Praeludium, the sonata offers two sets of variations. The first of those is of the ground bass or *ostinato* stripe, in which a cyclically recurring bass line provides the underpinning for any amount of melodic fantasy above. It is followed by a second set of variations on an ornate melody that provides Biber with no end of possibilities for intriguing transformations and permutations.

Johann Sebastian Bach

Violin and Harpsichord Sonata in A major, BWV 1015

Bach's six accompanied violin sonatas BWV 1014-1019 date from a particularly contented period in his life and career. As of 1717, he had settled in the bucolic principality of Anhalt-Cöthen, where a young and musically sophisticated Prince Leopold maintained a splendid *kapelle* staffed with first-rate performers. The Calvinism of Leopold's Anhalt-Cöthen dictated the banishment of concerted church music, thus Bach devoted his Cöthen service to the prolific creation of secular works that would eventually confirm his posthumous reputation at the summit of musical Olympus. Bach might well have remained there indefinitely, but financial pressures from his ever-growing family, not to mention Leopold's marriage to a young woman who disapproved of his musical enthusiasms, led to Bach's seeking employment elsewhere. In 1723, Bach moved to Leipzig, where he spent 27 frustrating and under-compensated years that ended only with his death in 1750.

The Violin Sonata in A major, BWV 1015 is essentially a trio sonata, that two-violin-plus-continuo mainstay of Baroque chamber music. However, Bach provides a fully written-out keyboard part that does double duty as both second violin part and requisite harmonic support. Bach's opening slow movement, marked only *dolce*, places the two melody instruments (violin and clavier right hand) in a canonic, or follow-the-leader, relationship: whatever one instrument states is likely to be picked up promptly by the other. It's followed by an Allegro that bears all the hallmarks of Bach's mature fugal style: a subject stated in the violin is then answered in the clavier's right hand, then in the clavier's left hand, creating a three-voice texture that treats its subject imitatively throughout and visits numerous key centers along the way.

The third-place Andante un poco, in the relative minor key, features a "walking" bass line of nearly-constant notes that that underpin a luxuriantly falling-then-rising melody. To conclude, Bach provides a jolly Presto, its dancelike character highlighted by foursquare rhythm and clearly-etched phrases.

Francesco Maria Veracini
Violin Sonata Accademiche in D minor,
Op. 2, No. 12

Biographies of Baroque era composers can be frustratingly murky, in that only glimmers of personality can be discerned through the typically scant documentary evidence. But even the most academically opaque studies of Francesco Maria Veracini make one character trait quite abundantly clear.

Which is that Veracini was a diva. Arrogant and conceited, he was a preening braggart whose very sanity was a matter of opinion. In a multiply reported incident, he either jumped from, or perhaps was tossed from, a third-floor window in Dresden after

an altercation with the composer Pisendel. Or maybe it was a gang of jealous orchestra players bent on killing him, according to Veracini himself. Or maybe he jumped in a fit of psychosis. He broke both a foot and his hip. Or maybe it was his leg. At any rate, he limped for the rest of his life.

He had a lousy reputation. But most sources describe him as an electrifying violinist. And he was a dazzling, if quirky, composer. That's gloriously in evidence with Violin Sonata Accademiche in D minor, Op. 2, No. 12, all three of its movements built on the familiar descending chromatic bass line that's probably best known via Dido's dying lament in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. The opening Passagallo follows that line through both upper and lower lines, marked "Largo assai, e come sta, ma con grazia"—a downright Mahlerian directive that translates as "very broad, and (just) like that, but with grace." Perhaps the implication is that it would come off as a bit stern without the *grazia*. In second place comes a jaunty Capriccio cromatico, made out of "two subjects and their true reversals (retrogrades)." To conclude, a lilting triple-meter Ciaccona applies a major-key gloss to that descending bass line, adroitly avoiding tedium via strategic brief interludes inserted hither and yon between repetitions of the bass-line pattern. At the very end comes a return to D minor and the bass line in its original form.

Giuseppe Tartini
Third movement from Violin Sonata
in G minor, Bg. 5, *Il trillo del Diavolo*,
arr. for solo violin

Among those composers whose posthumous fame rests primarily on one work, Giuseppe Tartini's treatment at the hands of fate seems particularly myopic. He was no one-trick pony but a thoroughgoing professional: accomplished violinist, renowned teacher, influential music theoretician, and prolific composer of mostly violin music.

Originally trained for the priesthood, then for the law, he settled on a career in music and spent most of his career in Padua, where he died in 1770.

That famous one work is, of course, the *Devil's Trill* sonata. The name originated with Tartini himself, as reported by astronomer Jérôme Lalande in his *Voyage d'un Français en Italie*:

One night I dreamt that I had made a bargain with the Devil for my soul. Everything went at my command—my novel servant anticipated every one of my wishes. Then the idea struck me to hand him my fiddle and to see what he could do with it. But how great was my astonishment when I heard him play with consummate skill a sonata of such exquisite beauty as surpassed the boldest flight of my imagination. I felt enraptured, transported, enchanted; my breath was taken away; and I awoke. Seizing my violin I tried to retain the sounds that I had heard. But it was in vain. The piece I then composed, the Devil's Sonata, although the best I ever wrote, how far below the one I heard in my dream!

In its original guise, the sonata is for solo violin with “continuo”—i.e., two players, one on cello and the other on keyboard, both providing a harmonic underpinning to the violin line. But it also makes a highly effective piece when arranged for solo violin, as in this performance.

Joseph-Nicolas-Pancrace Royer

La Marche des Scythes, for solo harpsichord
Two centuries before Serge Prokofiev peeled the paint off auditorium walls with his orchestral slugfest *Scythian Suite*, Pancrace Royer conjured up a rowdy “Scythian March” that has almost single-handedly sustained his posthumous reputation down the years. Royer, a contemporary (and competitor) of Rameau, was an accomplished musician who taught King Louis XV's children while serving as the director of the famed Concerts Spirituels and writing six operas.

Royer's harpsichord music, like Rameau's, reflects his distinctly theatrical orientation. Harpsichordist Jean Rondeau describes both Royer and Rameau as “two magicians, two master architects, amongst the most wildly imaginative and brilliant of their era... Two composers who also tried to capture echoes of grand theatre with the palette offered by their keyboard.”

Jean-Marie Leclair

Violin Sonata in D major, Op. 9, No. 3, *Tambourin*

“An overabundance of good taste,” they said, describing the poised precision of Jean-Marie Leclair's violin playing. “Always perfect,” they added. All of which sounds like damning with faint praise, but in fact Leclair was one of the greatest of all French violinists, an exemplar of hyper-virtuosity in the service of lucid and sophisticated music-making. His career is one of steady rise through the ranks, including recognition by Louis XV and a lengthy stint in The Hague as a high-end *maestro di cappella*.

Which makes his having been murdered, by either his gardener, his nephew, or his ex-wife, all the more intriguing. He just doesn't seem like the type to meet such an unsavory end.

The Violin Sonata in D major, Op. 9, No. 3, subtitled *Tambourin* after its final movement, encapsulates Leclair's noble art at its best, a potent blend of Corellian elegance with the boisterous spectacle of French opera. Particularly interesting is its concluding *Tambourin*, a “drum” dance marked by stomping rhythms and a steady underlying drone.

Arcangelo Corelli

Violin Sonata in D minor, Op. 5, No. 12, *La Folia*

Life has never been easy for freelance musicians, but conditions in Rome during Corelli's lifetime were especially precarious.



The opera houses and theaters, usually reliable venues for steady employment, were closed more often than not, victims of ecclesiastical prudence in the face of political turmoil and natural disasters. Musical activity was largely private and confined to those patrons rich enough to afford it.

But Corelli never had anything to complain about. From the time he emerged from Bologna, where he had been admitted to the elite Accademia Filarmonica at age 17, Corelli was employed by the well-heeled and influential. The combination of steady income and discriminating listeners allowed Corelli the luxury of honing his works via frequent performances, so he never committed a piece to publication hastily or carelessly. Corelli was an exemplar of the “pure” musician—i.e., dedicated

to the highest standards of playing and composition, even if those ideals mandated a sharply limited output.

La Folia wasn’t originally a tune, but rather a chord progression that provided Renaissance and Baroque musicians with a framework for improvisations, much as the “chart” of a song serves for jazz musicians today. However, over time a particular melody attached itself to that progression and came to be identified as *La Folia*. Corelli’s Violin Sonata in D minor, Op. 5, No. 12 dates from 1700. Unlike its multi-movement counterparts, the D minor sonata consists of a single movement: *La Folia* followed by 23 dazzling variations on that familiar melody and its underlying chord progression.

—Scott Foglesong

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Recipient of a prestigious 2020 Avery Fisher Career Grant—the only early music specialist in the respected program’s history—and Grand Prize winner of the inaugural Lillian and Maurice Barbash J.S. Bach Competition, violinist **Rachell Ellen Wong** is a rising star on both the historical performance and modern violin stages. Her growing reputation as one of the top historical performers of her generation has resulted in appearances with renowned ensembles such as the Academy of Ancient Music, Jupiter Ensemble (led by lutenist Thomas Dunford), Bach Collegium Japan, Les Arts Florissants, and others. Equally accomplished on the modern violin, Wong made her first public appearance with Philharmonia Northwest at age 11; since then, she has since performed as a soloist with orchestras such as Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Panamá and the Seattle Symphony. Wong made her conducting debut with the Seattle Symphony in 2020 when

she directed Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* from the violin. Alongside acclaimed keyboardist David Belkovski, she is co-founder of her ensemble Twelfth Night, based in New York City. She also serves as concertmaster of Seattle Baroque Orchestra, and is on the faculty at the Valley of the Moon Music Festival in Sonoma, CA.

Highlights of Wong’s 2022–23 season include Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto with the Auburn Symphony (WA), Beethoven’s Violin Concerto with the Richmond Symphony (IN), and an appearance at the Edinburgh International Music Festival.

Originally from Seattle, Washington, Wong holds degrees from the Juilliard School, Indiana University, and the University of Texas at Austin. She performs on a violin made in 1953 by Carlo de March, and on a Baroque violin from the school of Joachim Tielke, ca. 1700.

For more information, please visit rachellwong.com.

Coleman Itzkoff is a cellist and performer currently based in New York City. Hailed by Alex Ross in the *New Yorker* for his “flawless technique and keen musicality,” he enjoys a diverse musical life, playing classical, contemporary, and Baroque cello interchangeably, in addition to arranging and improvising music. Recent highlights include performances with the Houston Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra; chamber performances at La Jolla Summerfest, Yellowbarn, and Marlboro Music Festival; and Baroque performances with Ruckus at Carmoor and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, as well as the release of the film and soundtrack for the Amazon Original *The Mad Women’s Ball*, for which he was the sole arranger and cellist.

A true interdisciplinary artist of the 21st century, Itzkoff has been featured in several projects as not only a musical artist, but as an actor and dancer as well, appearing on both the stage and on film. He is a long-time collaborator with the director and choreographer Bobbi Jene Smith, having appeared live in her work *Lost Mountain* and in her upcoming film *Broken Theater*, and is a founding member of AMOC, the American Modern Opera Company, which most recently served as guest music directors of the 2022 Ojai Music Festival. Itzkoff holds a bachelor’s degree in music from Rice University, a master’s degree in music from USC, and has earned an Artist Diploma from the Juilliard School. For more information, please visit colemanitzkoff.com.

Born in Skopje, Macedonia, **David Belkovski’s** journey as a musician has taken him from early ventures into Balkan folk music to the vibrant beginnings of a career as a conductor and soloist, performing reg-

ularly on harpsichord, fortepiano, and modern piano. First-prize winner of several international and national competitions, including the 2019 Sfzp International Fortepiano Competition, he has been recognized for his artistry on both historical and modern keyboards.

Belkovski made his Lincoln Center debut in 2019 as fortepiano concerto soloist with the American Classical Orchestra/Tom Crawford as well as with Juilliard415/Monica Huggett. He has also performed harpsichord concertos with the Canadian orchestra Les Violons du Roy and the Los Angeles-based Musica Angelica, among others.

Belkovski is fast building a reputation as a director from behind historical keyboards, recently making his debut with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, leading a production of Handel’s *Radamisto*. He has directed the Juilliard School’s renowned period ensemble, Juilliard415, in a performance and recording of his own commissioned work, *Chaconne*. Belkovski has prepared orchestras for William Christie and served as an assistant conductor for notable conductors such as Richard Egarr, John Butt, Gary Wedow, and Avi Stein.

As a recitalist, Belkovski has performed solo concerts on harpsichord and fortepiano across the United States, Italy, the United Kingdom, Portugal, and France. He has collaborated with violinist Rachel Barton Pine, countertenor Reggie Mobley, and tenor Nicholas Phan.

Alongside violinist Rachell Ellen Wong, Belkovski founded Twelfth Night, a dynamic period-instrument ensemble based in New York City.

As of 2022, Belkovski holds the position of Assistant Conductor for Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra.

COVID-19: Masking is required inside the auditorium, and is strongly recommended, though not required, for indoor lobby/waiting areas as well as outdoor spaces. Up-to-date vaccination is strongly recommended, though not required for entry. The latest information on Cal Performances’ COVID-19 safety policies is available at calperformances.org/safety.